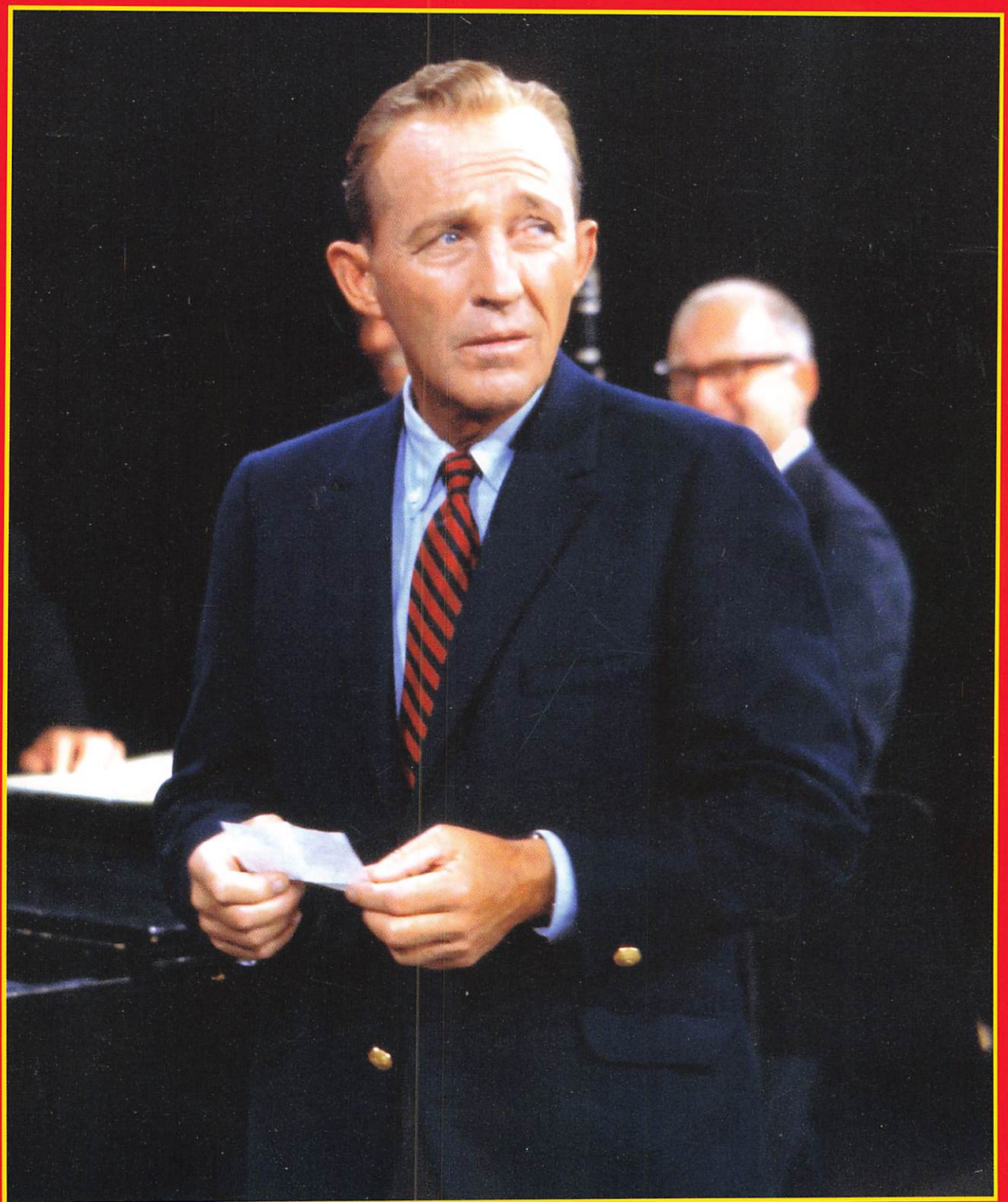
BING

Summer 2008

No. 149



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

Web sites:

Club:	www.club-crosby.org
BING magazine:	http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:	www.mcckc.edu/~crosby/
Bing Crosby Enterprises:	www.BingCrosby.com

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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of:
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the summer 2008 issue of BING magazine. With the seemingly endless winter those of us in the Midwest have had to endure this past year, summer could not arrive fast enough!

I'm sure you agree that Mary Crosby's letter to the ICC in our spring issue was a marvelous Valentine to us all. We can all be grateful for her kindness in taking the time to explain in such detail her position, and that of her family, with regards to promoting her father's legacy. Let's hope the Crosby family will soon reward us all by releasing the rare footage and tapes Mary mentioned in her letter, and supporting those interested in using Bing's image and likeness for positive promotion of his talents. A television producer friend of mine is interested in doing a 'Great Performances' program on Bing for PBS. That would certainly be a great start, and a wonderful project for the family to support and be involved with.

Speaking of supporting, our thanks to the many members who purchased the Sepia CD "Through The Years Vol. 1". May I now urge all members to support the second release "Bing Crosby Through The Years - Volume Two". It will be a must have addition to your CD library, and can again be purchased at discount prices through the ICC.

The massive fire on 1st of June at the Universal Studios lot in Hollywood came as quite a shock. The following day came the devastating news that thousands of record masters from the Fifties onwards, including many of Bing's original Decca recordings, may have been lost to the blaze. This appears, thankfully, to be untrue, however there is some doubt whether all the Decca masters have escaped unscathed. Either way, such a tragedy is humbling, and reminds us that the current chronological series of CD's on the Sepia label is an invaluable resource to fans and collectors alike.

With that, let me close by sending out good wishes to my fellow ICC members until the fall, and turn things over to Malcolm for more details on what you can find in your summer issue.

Greg Van Beek

Over the last few months, there have been many developments involving Bing all over the world and the contributions to this issue reflect that. Bing's 105th birthday attracted a lot of attention from the media with several broadcasters making tributes. It's a real pleasure to welcome Wig back to our pages as he tells us of one such programme.

It was sad to receive the news of Ralph Harding's passing. His name may not be known to many of the newer fellas but he made an enormous contribution to the various Crosby clubs from the 1950s to the '70s and even ran his own "Crosby Collector's Club" for six

years. His old friend Charlie Tupper has a tribute. Also, I was very sorry to learn of the death of Roger Osterholm whose book about Bing stimulated me to prepare the detailed diary of Bing's life which was eventually published as "Bing Crosby – Day By Day".

But on to happier subjects. An exciting development is the provision by Michael Feinstein of many rare tracks from Bing's Woodbury series and we hope to issue these to members on a cost price CD in due course. Further details will be found further on in this issue.

Ken Barnes has some more fascinating comments about his "Seasons" album which is to be issued on CD later this year. There's a very interesting article about Nathaniel Crosby and Martin McQuade updates us on a major Crosby event in New York.

This issue has some more unique research by Greg Van Beek and this time he looks at Bing's movie promotional records. Greg's earlier researches into Bing's PSA recordings have prompted Graham Pascoe to look at the Australian scene in a similar manner.

We have more about the Vancouver time capsule and news of the Clemmer Theatre in Spokane, then and now. Our front cover picture has been supplied by Jon Oye. Greg Van Beek provided the photos of Bing at the London Palladium in 1977 for the montage on the back cover. Our thanks to you both.

The Leeds meeting will take place in October and I am preparing some interesting material for it with help from Greg and from Ken Crossland. Hope to see lots of you there.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

It is a pleasure to report that "Bing Crosby - Through The Years Volume 1" has been acclaimed by members. The CD is attractively packaged with good photographs and the transfers are excellent bringing us Bing's voice with striking clarity. 375 copies have been bought by club members and volume 2 will be ready by November. Malcolm, Robin Cherry, Ron Bosley and Richard Tay are to be congratulated for continuing to bring us Bing in chronological order. Wig and I have distributed the CDs and we thank you for your support and trust that we will receive your order for volume 2.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members to the ICC and we trust that through their membership they will enhance their knowledge of Bing's work.

UNITED STATES

Robert H Wynn (Burbank, California) welcomed in the last issue of the magazine as the first new US member for 2008, is joined by 14 of his fellow Americans to whom we extend a warm welcome as they embark on what we trust will be an enjoyable first year's membership of the ICC.

Ronald Devers (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Steve Fay (Cuba, Illinois), Stephen Feldman (Manalapan, New Jersey), Jeremy Green (New York, New York), Bob Guberud (Park Rapids, Minnesota), Charles Huck (Warrenville, Illinois), John Jensen (Federal Way, Washington), Tad Ludes (Ventura, California), James Marturano (Brooklyn, New York), Bill Stimson (Spokane, Washington), Joseph Sutkowski (Oakland, New Jersey), Charles Thiese (Chicago, Illinois), Mike Welly, (Dayton, Ohio), Ben Whiteley (New York, New York).

UNITED KINGDOM

Mr P A Long (Guilford, Essex), Brian J Odel (London), Jim Brownlee (Portadown, Co. Armagh), Gordon Owen (Kenton, Middlesex), Tracy Ayre (Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham), Geoff Perks (Blaenavon, Gwent), Mr S J McKean (Twickenham, Middlesex).

BELGIUM

Eric Pechon (Chantillion)

NEW ZEALAND

Phil Williamson (Karori)

AUSTRALIA

Allan Samyia (Carlingford, NSW), Ethel Woods (Rowville, VIC), Neville Seabury (Merrylands, NSW)

DONATIONS

Our list of generous supporters has grown once again and despite an increase in the subscription rate, members have continued their benevolent support for the club. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the following members -

From the United States and Canada

Scott Ables, Jim Allen, James Bauman, Michael Campbell, Tom Chevrette, James Clifford, Donald Cretella, Howard Crosby, Philip Crosland, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Leonard Davis, Stanley Diebel, Anthony Diflorio, Marlin Dornbush, Laurence Doyle, Joseph Duncan, Helen Feiereisen, Mike Ferruzza, Paul Fisher, Arne Fogel, Chris Hastalis, Frank Heiderer, Dick Heman, Rev. Jerome Heyman, Laurence Kieran, Marcie Kukla, Robert Larsson, Stan Lebby, Joyce Lundberg, Alan Matheson, Roger Mesiano, Mary Mantalto, Ralph Morris, Paul Murphy, Joseph Nigra,

Dolores Onorato, Jon Oye, Rev. Eugene Roberts, Donald Roegele, Frank Rodgers, John Sarro, Judy Schmid, Kurt Schroeder, Stanley Shipp, Aldo Silengo, Britton Smith, David Soule, Robert Stagnaro, Jane Stoutenborough, Mike Strada, Robert Stratiff, Ernest Sutkowski, Phil Teicher, Charles Townsend, Greg Van Beek, Charles Van Riper, Charles Vincent, Norman Wolfe, Judy Wysokowski.

From the United Kingdom

Roger Addey, Joan Torey, John Vaughan, Des Cusak, Richard Cane, Ronald Moss, Bob Halls, Gill Stenning, Ron Bosley

From the Isle of Man

Tim Page

From Germany

Dieter Beier

From Ireland

Eddie McGinley

From Australia

Bruce Chinchen, Jack Stoner, Jack Watt, Hazel Nunn.

Further donations will be acknowledged in the winter edition of BING.

DEATHS

With sadness I draw members' attention to the passing of the following members -

Ralph Harding (Merthyr Tydfil, Mid. Glamorgan), John Teale (Manchester), Ron Chuck (Saltash, Cornwall), Alan Lee (Sunderland, Tyne & Wear), Kenneth Greenwood (Littleborough, Lancashire), Eric Crowder (Nottingham), John Stenning (Portslade, East Sussex).

Ralph Harding was a dedicated, ubiquitous and intelligent Crosby collector who spent a considerable portion of his life working tirelessly on behalf of Bing enthusiasts worldwide. His involvement as compiler and publisher of the *Road To Bing Crosby* discography was his outstanding achievement with all his dedicated service at the typewriter coming before the advent of the computer. Ralph was a giant amongst Crosby collectors and I have a 78 (signed by Bing) which he gifted me as an act of friendship, to remind me of our association of nigh on 50 years. Charlie Tupper takes up the story below.

John Teale was a retired gas engineer. He served in the forces in India during world war two and he enjoyed his Bing collecting to the end. John had an extensive collection, not only of Bing but of many other artists too. The family plan to auction his collection in the near future.

To the family and friends of those we have lost, we extend our sincere condolences.

MEMBERSHIP

In February when I wrote my last report, 180 subscriptions were outstanding. Pleasingly, a majority of these members responded positively to appeals from Wig and I to renew their membership for 2008. Many added donations thus helping to keep the ICC funds viable for the coming year. Unfortunately, we did lose nearly 50 members but the new members cited above helped to offset this loss. We are always keen to learn of any ways that might help encourage new members to join the ICC. Do let us have your views.

CALENDAR 2008

10 copies of this much admired production by Ron Bosley remain for sale and it is worth buying the calendar for the rare pictures that Ron has featured. Please write to me if you wish to buy a copy.

TROUBADOUR

3 copies of this entertaining book remain for sale at £15.99 and may be obtained from me at my home address.

LEEDS 2008

Date for the 43rd Dinner/Meeting is Sunday October 5th Further details later in this issue.

Until winter, My kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

RALPH S. HARDING (1920-2008)

Charlie Tupper pays a tribute to his old friend.

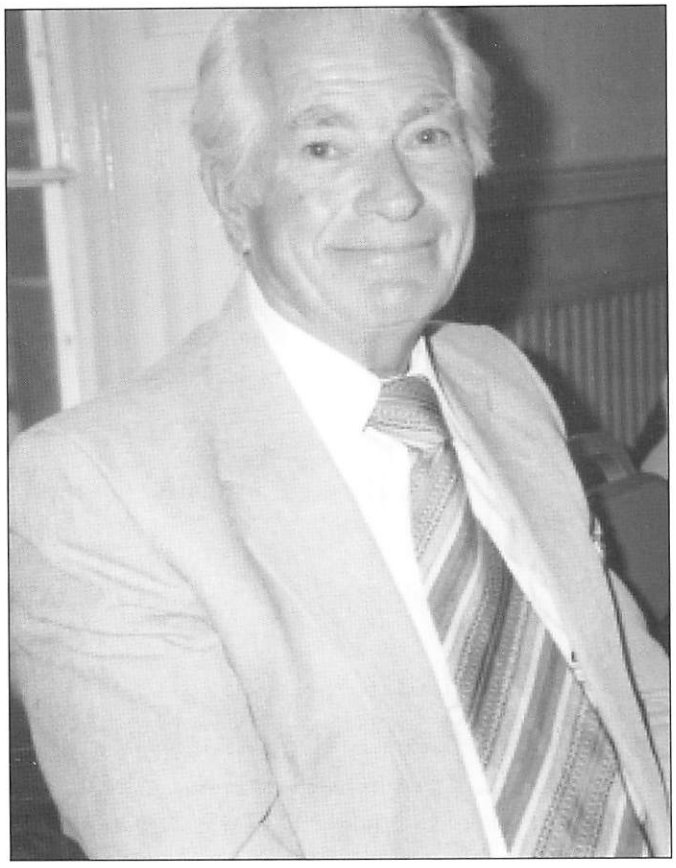
Ralph died on 16th May last. What can I say about my friend and fellow Crosby collector? He was always a great help, especially when it came to assisting me with my Bing Crosby collection. Although he was knowledgeable in all aspects of music it was jazz and more especially his first great love Bing that drove his enthusiasm.

Ralph kept Bing's name very much alive during the 1960s and through into the 70s. This was before Bing's career resurgence when his career took off anew with several surprise concert tours and some great new recordings. I remember going with Ralph to both of Bing's *Parkinson* shows and his 1976 and 1977 triumphs at the London Palladium followed by his very last concert performance at the Brighton Centre.

I first met Ralph about 1966 when I started travelling to the Bing meetings, having been a member since 1954. We used to travel overnight in his Ford Anglia and had many adventures on the way. These started with the meetings held at the house of Michael Crampton's mum. Ralph would never hog the middle lane of the motorway if the third lane was available for

cruising at 60 mph.

In the early 1960s Ralph decided to produce a new quality magazine devoted to Bing and appropriately named "The Crosby Collector". This was when there was a little dissent within what was then the International Crosby Circle. Ralph's magazine was not set up to rival BING magazine but it did set a standard which the official Crosby organ found it hard to match on occasion. I spent many happy hours during evenings and weekends working on a very large round table collating the various pages.



Ralph at a Leeds meeting some years ago

In those days Ralph had a very large record collection. It comprised LPs and 78s of jazz and Bing. I learned a lot from him regarding Crosbyana. He was regarded as quite a character amongst fellow Crosby collectors around the world. He would always emphasise a point of view in his own way. Nothing would stand in his way when he was pursuing his hobby. I went to Ainsdale, near Southport, with him to watch Bing play in a charity golf match. Ralph produced a battered piece of cardboard bearing the word "Press". He convinced security that as a magazine publisher he should have access to Bing to discuss some editorial issues. He managed to get a few of us into the private marquee where Bing was relaxing and then produced some covers for future issues of "The Crosby Collector". He asked Bing to autograph these. This produced the comment, "Oh, it's you, Ralph", as Bing took out his pen and obliged. No doubt an earlier meeting with Ralph was imprinted on Bing's mind. This occurred when Ralph engineered a meeting with Bing at a London hotel and challenged Bing on his correct date of birth.

Ralph will be very much missed. He was the publisher and co-author of the Bing Crosby discography "The Road to Bing Crosby" published in four parts during 1964 and 1965. He was the pioneer who piloted the transition of the study of Bing Crosby from fandom to serious appreciation.

I spent many happy days with Ralph, his family and his many good friends. I will always remember him very fondly.

Charlie Tupper

Golf tournament now raises money for Crosby Scholars

The Winston-Salem Journal for May 21 had an interesting article by Tim Clodfelter about our Honorary President.

Seven years after the Crosby National Celebrity Golf Tournament came to an end, North Carolina is still part of Kathryn Crosby's life.

"The people here are the reason I came here in the first place," she said.

Crosby, 74, the widow of entertainer Bing Crosby, lives in Genoa, Nev. But she was in Winston-Salem yesterday and Monday to attend the Crosby Scholars golf tournament. The tournament, which took place yesterday at Bermuda Run, raises money for the Crosby Scholars Community Partnership, a nonprofit organization that started as an offshoot of the charity golf tournament.

Bing Crosby, an avid golfer, founded the Crosby celebrity tournament in California in 1937. In 1986, Kathryn Crosby said that the California tournament was too commercialized and not focused enough on raising money for charity. She brought it to Bermuda Run, and it continued here until 2001, when dwindling attendance and difficulty finding sponsors led to its end.

Crosby continues to come here yearly to support Crosby Scholars, which helps more than 4,000 middle and high-school students prepare for college each year.

"This is a firm commitment," Crosby said.

"It's extremely important to have her come in every year and support the program," said Mona Lovett, the executive director of Crosby Scholars. "The community has benefited greatly from her generosity and her involvement.... She could just say 'good wishes' from New York, Genoa or wherever she may be."

Next week, Kathryn Crosby will fly to Burbank for a Hope and Crosby reunion—she will attend the 99th birthday celebration for Dolores Hope, the widow of Bing Crosby's comedy partner Bob Hope.

Crosby travels at least once a month, but still finds time to pursue other interests, including painting and performing a one-woman show.

"I wrote a cabaret about my life with Bing and how we met and our courtship, which was very rocky, and our marriage," she said. She sings and tells stories from their life in the show, which she has performed in New York and Los Angeles. This Christmas, she will perform the cabaret again in New York, and hopes for a good turnout.

"If Winston-Salem would just move north for a day or two," she said with a laugh. "It's fun to have people sing along with me."

She has been pleased to see the revival of Bing Crosby's old films on DVD. "There's a great deal of interest in Bing," she said. "Suddenly in America I think it's good to be a nice guy, and he was that. There were a number of years when you had to be a swinger or work in Vegas a lot. But Bing never did work in Vegas because his mother wouldn't have liked it."

Tim Clodfelter

Bing and Blue Eyes

Army Archerd's column of June 19 contained some worthy of note news.

A meeting between Nancy Sinatra, Jr. and Mary Crosby is being set—both ladies tell me. Bing died 30 years ago, and his Website, www.BingCrosby.com was inaugurated last Oct. by Mary. Frank died 10 years ago, and www.Sinatrafamily.com and www.FrankSinatra.com have been heftily in operation thanks to Nancy. The latter Website is successfully offering Sinatra's products, Nancy tells me. Meanwhile, international fans participate in the other site, which Nancy runs, "hands on."

The two ladies have been emailing each other, and Nancy is anxious to see that Bing, too, is well remembered. "I know Mary is determined to see the new generations know more about Bing, and I'm proud that she is doing it. We need to help her get organized. It takes a lot of hard work." Mary admits, "As a family, we have been under the radar—we have done Bing a disservice. Nancy Sinatra is 'an inspiration' to us -and she's so supportive. She'll be my mentor. We'll brainstorm on our meeting(s). (Nancy is back from an appearance before Rep. Howard Berman's committee in D.C. to urge passage of legislation to give performers a royalty for songs played on radio. She says, "It was the scariest appearance I've ever made. I was terrified.")

The Sinatra Website has an easier task selling some of his recordings—he owned his Reprise masters, Nancy says. "The best advice he ever gave me was to own my masters." Meanwhile, the Crosby family continues its legal battle to gain royalties from contracts with MCA RECORDS. Mary's husband, attorney Mark Brodka, is pursuing the cases (originated in 2000) to gain royalty payments and masters for HLC (Harry L. Crosby) Properties Ltd. Brodka is now awaiting a trial date.

Meanwhile, Mary and mother, Kathryn, continue their own careers: Mary is about to start "Queen of the Lot" for Henry Jaglom. And Kathryn, fresh from her one-woman show in the Catskills, has a Dec. 7-8 date at the Lambs Players Theater in Coronado, and a return to Feinstein's, Dec.14 - 15.

Army Archerd

Ron Field's bash

Ron's Bing tribute at the Roxy Theatre, Morton, Washington on Bing's birthdate - Saturday 3rd. May - was received well by all those that attended, but Ron was disappointed with the small numbers of 55 and 34 for the two performances. But with the sponsorship and the attendance, the event made some money, produced some excellent publicity for Bing and several people expressed an interest in joining the ICC. Thanks for all your hard work, Ron.

Blues Skies in Australia!

Rod Poynter of Wollongong in New South Wales reports on a Crosby event.

Sunday May 18, 2008, may be remembered by cinema-goers as *The Crosby Boys Big Day Out,* at least in Sydney, Australia. On that day, the ICC's Australian representative David Currington, along with yours truly and wife Christina, attended a performance by the 'Ozcats' - plus a screening of *Blue Skies* on the big screen at the Cremorne Orpheum, a beautifully restored art deco cinema.

'Ozcats', features top jazz musos, including veteran trumpeter Bob Barnard, recreating the unique sound and spirit of Bob Crosby's 'Bobcats'. Kicking off with 'March Of The Bobcats,' they worked their way through much of the band's repertoire in fine style.

After interval came a stunning colour print of Paramount's *Blue Skies.* To quote Leonard Maltin, "the plot is paper thin," but lots of magic moments, including, of course, Bing and Fred's "A Couple of Song And Dance Men", made it well worth the price of admission. This was probably the movie's first major big screen outing in Australia since its initial local release, in December, 1947. Solid applause, from a near capacity house of around 800, wrapped up a top day's entertainment.

Blue Skies is the third Crosby film to be screened at the Orpheum in the last 12 months. *High Society* has become an annual event there; while last December, *White Christmas*, a movie I've never really cared for on television, was shown - the live audience reaction giving it a surprising new dimension.

Rod Poynter

I'll Be Home For Christmas

Dick Hoffman of Youngstown, New York spotted the following in the December 2007 "SPIRIT" magazine

published by Southwest Airlines.

Last year, 'I'll Be Home for Christmas' earned a university $21,000

Which one? If you guessed St. Lawrence, we want you on our Quizzo team. Alumnus J. Kimball Cannon, the song's composer, left 30 percent of all his royalties to the Canton, New York, university in his will.

The payments started in 2000, following the death of Cannon's widow. Since then, St. Lawrence has earned nearly $175,000 from the tune, mostly thanks to the 300-plus covers from artists as varied as Bette Midler, Sarah McLachlan, and Brad Paisley. **But none generate as much revenue as Bing Crosby's original 1943 version.**

(Editor: Good Ol' Bing!)

The Amazing World Of Collectors

In February, the Derby Evening Telegraph in the East Midlands of the UK published a special 32 page supplement about collectors in general. A picture of Bing and our own Arthur Blood on the cover was encouraging but the real bonus was a 2-page spread about Arthur and his Bing collection. The article read well too and we have great pleasure in reproducing this with grateful thanks to the Derby Evening Telegraph.

"To Arthur, best always, Bing Crosby," reads the scrawl across a gold-framed photograph of the wartime star.

It is one of many that line the walls of a back-bedroom-turned-Bing-tribute-room in a semi-detached Derby house.

Arthur is pictured with a glass frame containing the tie Bing wore in his 1956 version of Anything Goes.

Owner Arthur Blood, 82, perhaps one of the great man's biggest fans, is gesturing excitedly to different things in his vast collection.

"This is the actual tie worn by Bing in *Anything Goes*," he said, holding up a navy, striped tie enclosed in a glass frame.

"And this was the first signed photo he ever sent me."

Arthur, of Osmaston Road, has painted his shrine to the star blue, and framed all his photographs in gold, as a nod to the song 'Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day'.

Cabinets and shelves house Arthur's collection of Crosby records, tapes, videos and CDs, all neatly labelled and filed.

The American actor and musician captivated audiences all through his life, before dying of a massive heart attack on a golf course, aged 74, in 1977.

Arthur tells the story of his lifelong love affair with all things Bing.

"I first went to the cinema in 1942," he said. "I watched the film *Holiday Inn*, starring Bing, and I fell in love with his voice. I was just 18."

Arthur's fascination with movies flourished as he worked as a page boy at the Derby Hippodrome.

He began collecting all the Bing records and memorabilia that he could lay his hands on, scouring local record shops for the latest releases.

"I started off collecting 78s. They were the really big old records, and they were very fragile too," he said. "I haven't got any left now though, I've sold them all to younger collectors."

Arthur joined the RAF and served as a wireless operator and air gunner in the Second World War.

He then went back to night school and took a course in welding, before finally finishing up as chief foreman at British Rail Engineering.

He seems quite happy to change with the times, and now a large part of his Crosby collection is on tape or CD.

"I have a copy of almost everything that Bing ever recorded," he announced proudly. "And I've been a member of the International Crosby Club for more than 50 years.

"We are trying to preserve Bing's musical legacy."

"Bing had more top 10 hits in America than Elvis and the Beatles put together."

The Derby pensioner saw his idol in concert twice – at the London Palladium in 1976 and just before the singer's death in 1977.

"Bing was magnificent," Arthur sighed. "The first time we went, I was two rows from the front, right in the middle, and when he strolled on to the stage, he looked immaculate."

Arthur also wrote to the star and sent him gifts on numerous occasions, and in return received letters and signed photographs, some of which he had framed.

"Bing was such a generous man," said Arthur. "He sent me some lovely pictures."

And for one of the planet's most famous singers and actors, the crooner was remarkably frank in his replies to letters from his fans.

In a letter to Mr. Blood, dated December 30, 1976, less than a year before his death, he wrote: "I like 'Feels Good, Feels Right' (his 46th LP) very much.

"I wish I had the chance to do the title track over again. They played it too slow and really dragged out the chorus for too long. I use it now as an opening song though. By picking up the tempo a lot in the verse, it's much more effective."

"It was a big shock when he died," said Arthur, quietly "I remember coming down my stairs and seeing the paper poking through the letterbox with a big headline.

"I felt like I'd lost a friend, but he never really left, because we have so many wonderful recordings to remember him by."

Wonderful publicity. Well done, Arthur!

Feinery!

Following our meeting with Michael Feinstein in January, Michael has been giving us further details of some of the material he would like to get issued on CD.

First of all the Woodbury tracks. He has enabled us to hear some of these and the quality is very acceptable bearing in mind their age and source. Michael had mostly obtained these acetates from the estate of Georgie Stoll and the songs included are shown below. Michael has not only given us permission to play these at our Leeds meeting in October but also to put together a CD of the tracks to be issued at cost to members only. This would be subject to Michael's copyright and with the proviso that the tracks are not to be duplicated. Geoff Milne is working on the CD for the ICC.

Beautiful Girl (December 11, 1933)
Dinah (November 6, 1934)
For All We Know (extract used at beginning of the programme) (October 9, 1934)
I'm Getting Sentimental Over You (October 30, 1934)
I'm In Love (October 9, 1934)
If I Had A Million Dollars (November 13, 1934)
June In January (with Kitty Carlisle) (November 27, 1934)
The Last Round-Up (December 11, 1933)
The Lonesome Road (Boswell Sisters only – November 20, 1934)
Love In Bloom (November 13, 1934)
Love Is Just Around The Corner (November 27, 1934)
Maybe I'm Wrong Again (November 6, 1934)
The Moon Was Yellow (And The Night Was Young) (extract) (November 13, 1934)
A New Moon Is Over My Shoulder (November 6, 1934)
The Object Of My Affection (Boswell Sisters only) (October 30, 1934)
Out In The Cold Again (November 13, 1934)
P. S. I Love You (October 30, 1934)
Rock And Roll (Boswell Sisters only) (November 20, 1934)
Stay As Sweet As You Are (Boswell Sisters only) (November 13, 1934)
The Sweetheart Waltz (October 9, 1934)
Two Cigarettes In The Dark (extract) (October 30, 1934)
Two Cigarettes In The Dark (October 30, 1934)
(When It's) Darkness On The Delta (Boswell Sisters only) (October 30, 1934)
With Every Breath I Take (November 27, 1934)

In addition, there are orchestral tracks from Georgie Stoll and His Orchestra. Also there is a short extract from a version of 'St. Louis Blues' by Bing and The Boswell Sisters. What a pity we don't have the full version!

Bing and the Boswells rehearse for a Woodbury show.

The Woodbury show of November 20, 1934 is a curiosity. Bing opens the show by announcing, in a hoarse voice, that he will not be able to sing. He had attended the football match between Santa Clara and St. Mary's University at the weekend in San Francisco. It rained throughout the game and Bing did a lot of

shouting in support. As a result he lost his voice. He takes no further part in the show until the conclusion when he returns to announce that next week he will sing songs from his new film *Here Is My Heart.* The Boswells and the orchestra fill in for him.

The General Electric shows.

We mentioned in our last issue that Michael had discovered a lovely version of "Dream A Little Dream Of Me" which had been intended for use in the GE shows in 1953/54 but never broadcast. He has found two other tracks which were recorded by Bing but never used in the shows and these are "You You You" and "Eternally". The latter song was a hit for Vic Damone in 1953 and was also known as the theme from the Chaplin film *Limelight.* Bing's pleasant rendition is backed by splendid accompaniment from the John Scott Trotter orchestra and it surely would have challenged Damone's version if it had been released. The songs, and many more from the GE shows, are held by the Crosby estate and I hope a way can be found to have them issued on a commercial CD.

Soundtrack recordings

Michael is keen to put together a CD of soundtrack recordings. He has soundtrack discs from films ranging from *Too Much Harmony* to *The Bells Of St. Mary's.* A highlight of these is Bing singing "In The Land Of Beginning Again" for the soundtrack of *Bells* and after the music finishes he says in a phony voice "All right, 12 o'clock. Everybody get their ass out!" to laughter from the technicians.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Dentist to the Stars

An article by Jennifer Moonsong in May in the *Glasgow Daily Times* (of Kentucky) described the life of dentist Robert Morrison (now aged 84). It included the following:

. . . "I went back to Michigan and got my bachelor's degree in dentistry," Robert said. "It was a four-letter word that took me to Las Vegas – WIFE. She was California born and raised and she wanted the warmth. She told me we could go anywhere that she could plant a palm tree." They went to Las Vegas and planted the palm tree he promised her.

The move turned out to be the move of a lifetime for Robert's career as a dentist.

"It was in the early 1950s when we moved there and it was wonderful," Robert said. "It was when you could still walk down the street and everyone knew your name."

Morrison developed a great dental practice there because he was performing procedures that his competition didn't know how to perform.

"I was offering root canals," Robert said. "People just couldn't believe that you could actually save a tooth." He developed more with his patients than good bedside manner. Robert developed lifelong friendships.

Most of Dr. Morrison's patients were not your run-of-the-mill customers either. At a time when Vegas was truly booming, many of his patients were celebrities and Las Vegas stars and starlets.

Among Morrison's big name patients were Jimmy Durante, Danny Thomas, Peggy Lee, Jack Benny and many more.

"Bing Crosby was one of the finest men to ever live," Robert said. "I was almost his best man when he came to Vegas to marry, but I was beat out by a sheep herder from his ranch."

Charro and Durante were two other favorites of his.

"Jimmy Durante was the most humble guy and Charro is such a vivacious person," Robert reminisced. He did dental work for Charro and her sister for many years and she still consults him from afar although he has retired.

"I spent 51 years in Vegas and it was wonderful."

(Editor: How nice to read these unsolicited tributes).

Bing's Movie Promotional Recordings

As a follow-up to my article in the Spring 2008 issue of BING magazine dealing with Bing's Public Service and Promotional recordings, I decided to tackle the numerous recordings made by the film studios and Bing's record labels to promote his films from the 1930's to the 1960's. These include special releases of songs, promotional interviews, radio promo spots, etc.

So popular and so eagerly anticipated were the songs from Bing's latest pictures, that Paramount began releasing them to radio in the early 1940's prior to the film premiere on their own label, Paramount Radio Recording. They were, for the most part, 10-inch, 78 rpm's, like conventional records, only these were pressed on unbreakable vinyl. Instead of the commercially recorded (and widely available) versions of the songs Bing cut for Decca, these Paramount discs featured the actual soundtrack recordings (i.e. the songs Bing pre-recorded at Paramount to lip sync to during filming). These are a veritable treasure trove; for you can hear the unobstructed performances, without sound effects, dialogue, dance steps, etc. that otherwise seem pointless without seeing the visual that accompanies the actions.

These Paramount discs also contain material not used in the films. For *The Big Broadcast of 1936*, Bing recorded the lovely verse to "I Wished On The Moon" during his pre-recording session. However, the verse

was not used in the film. We also have the opportunity to hear the opening musical interlude for "Put It There, Pal", from *Road To Utopia*, which was not used in the film.

For *Blue Skies*, Bing recorded many songs for the film's soundtrack that were not used. These include "I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket", "Cheek To Cheek", "What'll I Do?", "All Alone", "Remember", "Say It Isn't So", and "God Bless America". All can now be heard as they were intended in the film on the Paramount Publicity discs.

Welcome Stranger's Paramount Radio Recordings are a real gem, especially "Smile Right Back At The Sun", which features a totally different approach to the song than what was used in the film. It's a rarity to find an alternate take of a movie soundtrack pre recording! There are also parts of "Country Style" heard on the record that weren't used in the film, as well as the opening musical interlude to "My Heart Is A Hobo". Bing's vocal on that record doesn't begin until almost 30 seconds into the performance. The same situation applies for "As Long As I'm Dreaming". We can hear the male vocal chorus humming the song before Bing's vocal begins, without the dialogue between Bing and Joan Caulfield that was heard over it in the film.

"As Long As I'm Dreaming" in *Welcome Stranger*.

Of particular interest to me, as it's my favorite song from the film, we can now enjoy Bing singing the last words 'in your eyes' from the song "The Kiss in Your Eyes" that was interrupted by Joan Fontaine's plea for Bing to stop singing it in *The Emperor Waltz*. Bing recorded the complete song during his Paramount pre-recording session, however in the film, his vocal ends with the words 'the kiss…".

Major record labels also made special recordings to be sent to radio to promote Bing's records of the songs from his films. Decca sent a special 78rpm record to radio in 1949, featuring Bing offering brief introductions to his recordings on that label for the songs from *Top O' The Morning*. It was coupled with a Crosby / Andrews Sisters collaboration, "Betsy", made four years prior. Capitol records issued a similar 45rpm to radio stations in 1956 with four tracks, one each with Bing, Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Celeste Holm introducing their respective songs from *High Society*.

As with the PSA / Promotional recordings, some of those listed below will be very familiar, while others may come as a bit of a surprise. While this listing can by no means be considered complete, it does represent a good cross-section of this type of material.

I would encourage members to submit details of any other recordings of this type that you may have in your collections to either Malcolm or me. Additions will be published in future editions of BING. Here, then, is the list, in chronological order.

Bing Crosby Film Promotional Recordings

(special thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane and John Newton for providing much information on these records.)

1932: The Big Broadcast

Paramount Publicity Discs, 12" diameter (recorded in Los Angeles Aug. 7, 1932). With Nat. Finston & The Paramount Orchestra (special recordings contracted by Paramount and made in the Victor studios, not actual film soundtrack recordings).
Stuart Erwin talks with Bing
PCVE.68378-1 Here Lies Love (with Stuart Erwin)
PCVE.68378-2 Here Lies Love (with Stuart Erwin)
Sam Coslow announcement regarding songs
PCVE.68379-1 Please (with Stuart Erwin)
PCVE.68379-2 Please (with Stuart Erwin)

1933: College Humor

Paramount Publicity Discs, 12" diameter. With Nat. Finston & The Paramount Orchestra (special recordings contracted by Paramount and made in the Victor studios, not actual film soundtrack recordings).
PCVE.68471-1 Songs from *College Humor* featuring the cast (May 11, 1933)
PCVE.68472-1 Songs from *College Humor* featuring the cast (May 11, 1933)
PCVE.68472-2 Songs from *College Humor* featuring the cast (May 11, 1933)

1933: Too Much Harmony

Special *Paramount Movie Parade* 10 minute radio spot featuring soundtrack versions of the songs "Thanks", "Buckin' The Wind", "The Day You Came Along" (for radio syndication).
Paramount Publicity Discs, 12" diameter. With Nat. Finston & The Paramount Orchestra (special recordings contracted by Paramount and made in the Victor studios, not actual film soundtrack recordings).
PCVE.68536-1 Songs from *Too Much Harmony* – August 1933
PCVE.68537-1 Songs from *Too Much Harmony* – August 1933
PCVE.68538-2 *Too Much Harmony* – Spanish Promo

1934: She Loves Me Not
Paramount Discs. With Nat. Finston & The Paramount Orchestra (original film soundtrack recordings). 10" one-sided 78rpm discs with plain white typed labels
PBS.79170-1 Love In Bloom (with Kitty Carlisle) (recorded in April 1934)
PBS.79223-1 I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin' (with Kitty Carlisle) (April 1934)
PBS.79224-1 Straight From The Shoulder (with Kitty Carlisle) (recorded in April 1934)

1934: Here Is My Heart
Paramount Disc MX 79398-1 (original film soundtrack recording). 10" one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label
PBS.79398 June In January

1935: Mississippi
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording). 12" one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label
It's Easy To Remember

1935: Two For Tonight
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording). one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label
PCS.90294-1 Without A Word of Warning (July 1935). 12" diameter.
PCS.90295-1 From The Top of Your Head (July 1935). 12" diameter.
PBS.90316-1 Takes Two To Make A Bargain (July 1935). 10" diameter.
PBS.90339-1 Two For Tonight (July 1935). 10" diameter.

1935: The Big Broadcast of 1936
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording). 12" one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label
PBS.90143 I Wished On The Moon (complete with verse not used in film)

1936: Anything Goes
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording). one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label
PCS.97094-1 Moonburn (September 1935). 10" diameter.
PCS.97095-1 Sailor Beware (September 1935). 12" diameter.
PCS.97096-1 My Heart and I (September 1935). 12" diameter.

1936: Pennies From Heaven
Limited Edition autographed copies were made available of Bing's Blue-label Decca recording of the title song

1936: Rhythm On The Range
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording). one-sided 78rpm disc with plain white typed label.
PCS.97361-1 Empty Saddles (March 1936). 12" diameter.
PCS.97419-1 I Can't Escape From You (March 1936). 10" diameter.

1937: Double or Nothing
Paramount Demonstration Disc. 10" diameter.
B-4852 The Moon Got In My Eyes

1938: Doctor Rhythm
Paramount Publicity Transcription Disc, pressed by Victor, 16" diameter (original film soundtrack recordings).
Intro by Gayne Whitman
This Is My Night To Dream
On The Sentimental Side
Only A Gypsy Knows
My Heart Is Taking Lessons

1939: The Star Maker
12" 33 1/3rpm acetate "Hollywood Is On The Air" featuring excerpts from the film soundtrack recordings of the songs from the film. Specially packaged versions of Bing's Decca recording of "In My Merry Oldsmobile" were made available at Oldsmobile auto dealers as a tie-in to the movie.

1940: If I Had My Way
Universal Publicity Discs.
UPC6 Meet The Sun Half Way
UPC8 If I Had My Way
UPC9 I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire
UPC10 April Played The Fiddle

1941: Road To Zanzibar
Paramount Publicity Disc (original film soundtrack recording).
PO292 It's Always You

1941: The Birth of The Blues
Paramount Publicity Discs (original film soundtrack recordings).
The Waiter, & The Porter, & The Upstairs Maid (with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden – April 1941)
PCS.055358-1 My Melancholy Baby (with Jack Teagarden and Perry Botkin – April 1941)

1942: Road To Morocco
Paramount Publicity Discs (original film soundtrack recordings).
PP341 Ho Hum (Ain't Got A Dime To My Name)
PP342 Moonlight Becomes You

1942: Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn
Paramount Radio Recording label, single-sided 10" 78rpm records. Complete with studio announcer introducing the actual film soundtrack recordings
I'll Capture Your Heart (with Fred Astaire)
You're Easy To Dance With (Fred Astaire only)
White Christmas (with Marjorie Reynolds)
#PP8-T Be Careful, It's My Heart
#PP9-T Happy Holiday (with Marjorie Reynolds)
You're Easy To Dance With (instrumental)
I Can't Tell A Lie (Fred Astaire)
Easter Parade
Song of Freedom

1943: Dixie
Paramount Publicity Discs (original film soundtrack recordings).
PP362 She's From Missouri
PP364 A Horse That Knows The Way Home

1944: The Great John L
12" one-sided 78rpm NBC Orthacoustic Transcription Disc. Special 5 minute long promotional disc featuring Bing, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, & Frances Langford. Bing sings "A Friend Of Yours" with piano accompaniment

1946: Road To Utopia
Paramount Radio Recording label, dual-side 10" 78rpm records actual film soundtrack recordings
RR-13332 Put It There, Pal (Bing & Hope)
RR-13333 Would You? (Dorothy Lamour)
RR-13334 Personality (Dorothy Lamour)
RR-13335 Welcome To My Dream (Bing)

1946: Irving Berlin's Blue Skies
12" dual side Paramount Publicity 78rpm discs, plain light blue labels with dark blue lettering:
Overture medley: You Keep Coming Back Like A Song / Blue Skies (instrumental)
I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now (Bing & Billy DeWolfe)
You'd Be Surprised (Olga San Juan)
Code P-11 Radio Montage Medley: I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket / Cheek To Cheek /All By Myself
Code P-12 War Medley: Any Bonds Today? / This Is The Army, Mr. Jones / White Christmas / God Bless America (all by Bing)
Puttin' On The Ritz (Fred Astaire)
Serenade To An Old Fashioned Girl (Joan Caulfield)
I'll See You In C-U-B-A (Bing & Olga San Juan)
A Couple of Song & Dance Men (Bing & Fred Astaire)
Waltz Medley: You Keep Coming Back Like A Song / What'll I Do? / All Alone / Remember (Bing)
Blue Skies (Bing)
Nightclub Montage Medley: The Little Things In Life / Not For All The Rice In China / Russian Lullaby (all by Bing)
Everybody Step (Bing)
Say It Isn't So (Bing) / How Deep Is The Ocean? (female chorus)
Getting Nowhere (Bing)
Heat Wave (Fred Astaire)
Vocal Finale Medley: You Keep Coming Back Like A Song (Bing) / Blue Skies (Joan Caulfield)

1947: Welcome Stranger
Paramount Radio Recording label, dual-side 10" 78rpm records actual film soundtrack recordings.
RR-15377 Smile Right Back At The Sun
RR-15378 My Heart Is A Hobo
RR-15379 Make Mine Country Style
RR-15380 As Long As I'm Dreaming

1948: The Emperor Waltz
Paramount Radio Recording label, dual-side 12" 78rpm record. Actual film soundtrack recordings
RR-16173 Friendly Mountains
RR-16174B The Kiss In Your Eyes

1949: A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court
Cardboard picture record, 78rpm "Bing Crosby Brings You A Musical Message About the Paramount Picture A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court" b/w same

by William Bendix (Bing's photo on his side, Bendix on reverse side).

1949: Top O' The Morning
Paramount Radio Recording label, single-side 12" 33 1/3rpm record.
RR-16638 Spot Announcements For *Top O' The Morning* (radio promotion, 9 tracks)
Decca 10" 78rpm #24709 - 24710 "Bing Crosby Introduces Songs From Top O' The Morning" b/w #24718B Betsy by Bing Crosby & The Andrews Sisters

1950: Riding High
Paramount Radio Recording label, single-side 12" 33 1/3rpm record.
UR-115698 Spot Announcements For *Riding High* (radio promotion, 9 tracks)

1950: Mr. Music
Paramount Radio Recording label, dual-side 12" 33 1/3rpm record #RR-18025.
No. 1. STAR INTERVIEW with Bing Crosby (5:23) with script and open pauses for local DJ to speak the interview questions prior to Bing's answers (b/w No. 2 STAR INTERVIEW with Ruth Hussey).

1954: Irving Berlin's White Christmas
Paramount Radio Recording label, dual-side 7" 45rpm record #SP-1724.
White Christmas Theater Lobby Spot (same on both sides)

1956: Bing Presents Oreste (short)
10" 78rpm single-sided #EB-1420
Souvenir Record Bing Crosby-Bob Hope-Oreste
(Bing & Bob introduce song excerpts from opera singer Oreste Kirkop)

1956: High Society
7" 45rpm single sided on Capitol label #PRO 281 Disc Jockey Interview Record for use with the exclusive Capitol Soundtrack Album *High Society*. 4 interview tracks to use as lead in to soundtrack recordings:
Bing Crosby (1:25)
Grace Kelly (:42)
Frank Sinatra (:42)
Celeste Holm (:50)

1957: Man On Fire
7" 45rpm dual sided on Capitol label #F3695 Special Yellow label Promotional Record featuring Bing's face on the label, promoting Bings "sound-track version" of Man On Fire to radio (b/w Seven Nights A Week)

1962: The Road To Hong Kong
10" one-sided white label United Artists LP #SP-1935. Radio Spot Announcements for *The Road To Hong Kong* 4 tracks, one 60 second and three 20 second spots. Featuring Bob Hope.

Greg Van Beek

Editor: Great stuff, Greg. John Newton has indeed been very helpful and he wrote to us pointing out a couple of errors in our listings of Bing's PSA recordings in our last issue. Here's his letter:

Hello Greg and Malcolm:

I was reading BING magazine and saw your fine article on Bing's public service recordings. Well done, and appreciated by an old Bing collector (though not that old.)

I'm working myself, on a similar "discography" of Bing's movie-related recordings; not anything commercially recorded or issued, but studio discs, exploitation records, original sound-track pressings, and so on...

I've been speaking with Wig Wiggins about my work in this area for a few years, as long as I've been working on the material and gathering both discs and information. I've got a pretty large collection of these discs (having collected them since I was in my teens, around 40 years ago), including a goodly number of duplicate copies (available for trade for things I don't already have.)

Anyway, I have a couple of questions...

In your article, under the year 1942, you listed "Junk Ain't Junk No More" (a favorite Bing recording) as a 10-inch, 78rpm. This is a 12-inch 78rpm, with a green World Broadcasting label, for the "National Salvage Campaign, July 1942" (although probably recorded in June). There are two separate "takes" of Bing on this,

along with other artists doing the same song, including an instrumental version by John Scott Trotter's Orchestra (all separately "banded", like an LP).

Separately, I thought I should mention that in your article you listed "The Seventh Air Force" song as 1945, after the 1944 listing of Fifth Marines (TL-152A)... but the 7th Air Force song was actually done BEFORE the Marines disc... The 7th Air Force song is matrixed TL-151. (The Air Force disc appears as an un-numbered 10-inch pressing, but the 12-inch Decca test pressing - 10-inch recording on a 12-inch one-sided pressing - has the matrix engraved into the dead wax on the outer-most edge. The engraved matrix actually shows TL-150 crossed out and TL-151-A engraved following. TL-151 is also rubber-stamped on the white Decca label.

Hoping this finds you well, both of you, and, again, congratulations on a wonderful, enlightening article! All good wishes,

John Newton

Greg received plenty of other comments about his article too. The first to write was Martin McQuade.

Hello, Greg. I would like to mention that your article on Bing's PSA recordings was outstanding. There was a recorded endorsement for Country Music Month sometime in the early seventies in which Bing introduces Eddy Arnold, Pearly Mae, etc. Perhaps this could be added to the list. If I think of any others I will let you know.

Congratulations for an outstanding article.

All my best, **Martin McQuade**

Another good issue of BING. If I had to select just one article of outstanding interest it would be Greg Van Beek's superbly researched article on Bing's public service and promo recordings. Wouldn't those recordings make a good CD set? **(Keith Parkinson)**

***Greg** responded with:*

I found info. on another record, a 45rpm from the early 1950's put out by Halo Shampoo of Bing's Whiteman recording of 'You Took Advantage of Me'. I'm sure we'll never be able to say with certainty that we know of all of these types of recordings Bing made. But, this is a start. It really is uncharted territory in the Crosby discography.

If you have someone who could make copies, I'd be glad to take Keith up on his suggestion, and put a majority of these PSA recordings on a CD that could be offered for sale to members as a way to raise funds for the ICC.

Meanwhile, there were plenty of comments on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

I have been finding Greg Van Beek's article, pages 15-20 in the new BING magazine, cataloging many of Bing's promotional recordings, very fascinating. It ends with a call for information about more similar recordings, which seems like a thread-worthy topic for the discussion board. If you have something to add about some of the recordings Greg lists, or especially, if you know of other similar recordings that might qualify as additions to Greg's list, post them here. Greg, please jump in and tell more about how you got so interested in these kinds of recordings and how you have gone about researching/collecting them!

Having worked in radio years ago, I'm familiar with PSAs, having transfered many from reel-to-real tape onto tape cartridges, at a small radio station where I worked part-time for a couple of years in the early 1970s, but I see from your list, you include records that hold normal song tracks, not only special promo messages, even 12-inch LPs, presumably sold to benefit a cause or given away to publicize a cause. I have the UN "All-Star Festival" record listed, which is very good, and although it only includes one Bing selection, it is Bing and Louis doing "Lazy River"!

I wondered whether some of these promo LP's are repackaged commercial recordings, as opposed to special recordings especially made for the purpose? Are the origins of some of these recordings rather murky?

I have two I want to ask about, which may not be the least bit rare, but which don't appear in Greg's listing in BING magazine:

The first I want to mention is one of two Bing "Sing-Along" LPs I have. One seems to be a regular Decca release, but the other seems to benefit or promote scouting. The title of the record is "The Girl Scouts of America presents: Sing-Along with Bing." The listener is invited to "Join Bing Crosby and the Children's Camp Chorus as they sing...." It apparently originally included lyrics for the 28 or so songs, but it wasn't with the copy I have when I got it. No date or record company is listed, but it is "compatible" with stereo phonographs. A few of the songs are also on Warner Brothers 1363, the other sing along album I have. Apparently it sold at the discount price (to scouts or scout supporters?) of $2.98.

The other one, like a couple on Greg's list, benefits a business interest rather than a charity or civic interest. The other record I have, benefiting or promoting the La-Z-Boy Chair Company (or their associated dealers?) might or might not fit on the list. I suspect it may be rather common since it is a Christmas record, titled "Songs of Christmas: Bing Crosby." It features a cover photo of Bing and Kathryn wrapping presents, Bing seated in a rather tasteful, gold La-Z-boy chair. It is labeled as a product of Decca's Custom Department and has a Decca record number of DL 34461, but no date.

Greg, can you explain more about how you would determine whether to include such a record on your list or not? I can post track listings for either of those, if anyone is interested. Perhaps most of you know both of these rather well already.... **(Steve Fay)**

Greg came back with:

Thank you for your interest and enthusiasm for my article in the latest issue of BING magazine. Hopefully your plea will help ferret out more of Bing's PSA recordings from other's who post here.

Over the years of collecting, I realized I acquired a fairly large number of these types of recordings, and when sorting through them one day, I was amazed at just how much work Bing did in this capacity. I felt these recordings were sort of "uncharted territory" in the Crosby discography, and deserved to be documented, which was the basis for my article. Those I included are only the one's I've run across, which is why the listing is by no means complete. Indeed, there must be many more.

You are right, that some of the records listed are just repackaged versions of Bing's commercial recordings (the UN "All-Star Festival" record you mentioned being a good example). That's where things do get a bit "murky". To include or not to include, that is the question!

I have the La-Z-Boy Chair Company Christmas record, titled "Songs of Christmas: Bing Crosby" that you mentioned. Yes, it benefits the sale of La-Z-Boy chairs, for which Bing and Kathryn appeared in an ad campaign during 1967, but it is no more than a repackaged version of the same Decca Christmas record that was released a few years earlier, under the same title. The only difference being the cover photos. Should it be included? Perhaps.

Now "The Girl Scouts of America presents: Sing-Along with Bing" probably should be included. I have this record as well, and its sale did indeed benefit the Girl Scouts. However, I wonder if Bing even knew of its existence, and what he thought of (or if he even approved of) the overdubbing of the children's chorus singing along with him on all of the tracks?

There were countless Christmas music compilations produced over the years for various companies (Goodyear Tires produced an annual Christmas album in the 1960's and 1970's, as an example), and each of these usually featured a common recording from Bing. These I decided to omit altogether.

You are on the right track, though, Steve, and I'm grateful to you for mentioning these two records I over looked. If you, or anyone else, finds more PSA or promotional recordings by Bing, please post them here. They will be included in a future issue of BING magazine.

Greg Van Beek

(Editor; Greg's article certainly created some interest and here's Graham Pascoe with an Australian slant on the same subject.)

This is Bing Crosby for ... Australians

Graham Pascoe offers an Australian view.

During the several years of research for my new book *Remembering Bing, Bing Crosby and Australian entertainment*, I found many examples of Bing's special recordings of public service announcements or promotions being used in this country, just as Greg Van Beek did in the USA. Like Greg, I'll describe them in chronological order, with some background information where appropriate.

1939

During the late 1930s, a Melbourne radio announcer, Norman Banks of station 3KZ presented a regular program *Crooners and croonettes*. He had sent Bing a recorded message of appreciation from six listeners. In return Banks had received a letter and record from Bing in reply. The record was a 12-inch, single-sided US Decca, beginning with a message:

> *Hullo friends in Australia. I was tremendously delighted with the prodigious record ... You know if time permitted and if I had my way I would hop on a boat and come to see you all. Failing this, here is an old American ballad that the Comet Quartetteers love to harmonise. It is called "If I Had My Way".*

The record concluded with Bing singing 'If I Had My Way', which he had recorded for Decca on 31 March and was the title song of his forthcoming movie. The radio station distributed to each of the listeners who had recorded the greeting a copy of Ted and Larry Crosby's book *Bing* which had been published in 1937 and which Bing had autographed.

1944 and 1945

During late war years, Bing appeared in several short films for the US Treasury Department and the War Activities Committee in support of the US war effort and records were made of songs he sang in these films. The films were brought to Australia and shown in cinemas. Three 10-inch 78 rpm records were pressed in Sydney by the EMI subsidiary, The Columbia Graphophone Company, using the 'Process Recording' label which had been introduced in 1937 for private recordings such as advertisements, speeches and political messages. These three records were issued to cinemas, to be played during intervals, and to radio stations. In the film *The Road To Victory* Bing sang "Buy Another Bond Today" which Columbia pressed on a single-sided record. 'Buy A Bond' from *All-Star Bond Rally* was on another record, backed by 'Let's Finish The Job' by W Christenson and orchestra. A third was another single-sided Crosby record of 'We Have Another Bond To Buy'

from *Hollywood Victory Caravan*. A test record of Bing singing another song, 'I'm Saving A Dime Out Of Every Dollar', was sent also but not pressed in this country.

The Australian government was able to use Bing Crosby in the promotion of its £70 million Security Loan in a cinema advertisement *Calling In The Tune*. The National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra has a copy of the film which 'Shows Bing Crosby singing backed by a Navy Choir' with an end title, 'Secure their future. Invest in the £70 million Security loan'. This may have used footage from the *Swingtime With The Stars* short.

1945

In 1945 radio station 2KY in Australia's largest city, Sydney, started Australia's Bing and Swing Club, which in time had thousands of members. The announcer Brian Howard broadcast so-called 'open-end interviews' in which he asked pre-determined questions of Bing and then played Bing's recorded answers as though Bing was live on air by phone to Howard in the studio. Three *Bing and swing* programs each week were still being broadcast by 2KY in December 1954 and the last *Bing and swing* program was presented on 1 September 1958.

Circa 1946

Melbourne radio station 3AW formed the All Australia Bing Crosby Club in 1945. Initially it used an Australian composition titled 'It is Crosby. Who else could it be?' as its theme song until it was replaced by a radio transcription recording of 'Bless 'Em All' which 3AW had received from Bing. He'd recorded the song before World War 2 ended and had added the remark, 'The war's over'. This record was played at the club's branch meetings at venues such as church halls, which 3AW arranged for almost fifty branches. Bing's 1932 record of 'It's Within Your Power' had not been released in Australia but 3AW had imported a copy and arranged for a limited pressing of it backed by 'Bless 'Em All' for sale to club members.

1946

Melbourne vocalist Danny Keating had won a crooning contest in 1937 and after he won 3AW's search for a local singer with a voice like Bing in 1945 he was trying to raise funds for a youth club he had established in North Melbourne by making an appeal on Melbourne radio in 1946. Bing sent Keating some medals and autographed photographs for club members and a sizeable donation and gave his permission for Keating to sing a duet with him on a Sunday morning program on 3AW. Bing's recording of 'Where The Blue Of The Night' was played in one studio while Keating sang the song with a guitar backing in another studio. Bing had sent a recorded message to be played:

Hullo Australia. This is Bing Crosby. I'm speaking to you from Hollywood at the instigation of my Australian counterpart down there Danny Keating, who was known as the Australian Bing Crosby, or was I the American Danny Keating? ... I hope people listening to this broadcast will find it in their hearts to help in the effort (to raise funds for the community centre).... I send my very best regards to all of my friends in Australia...'

1949

Even in Adelaide, where there had been some strong resistance to embracing the talents of the Old Groaner in the 1930s, a program *The Crosby Club presents* was introduced on 5KA by Douglas Black in 1949. Black's program continued into the mid-1950s and Black was able to broadcast messages which Bing had recorded for his listeners and sent to the station. They were recorded on acetate discs and later on tape.

1956

Reports that Bing might tour Australia had been published in 1955 but nothing had eventuated. Imagine the delight of Bing's Aussie fans when they learned that Gary Crosby would perform in Australia with the great Louis Armstrong whose 'Gone Fishin" with Bing had made Gold record status in Australia. One way in which they learned of the tour was from two special 10-inch promotional records announcing the forthcoming tour which Bing made for distribution to radio stations. The tour included concerts in April 1956 in Sydney at the Stadium and in Melbourne at the Palais Theatre in St Kilda.

Graham Pascoe

(Editor: Thanks, Graham. Please see Books 'N' Bing for a review of Graham's new book.)

The Clemmer Entertainers

In BING #134 (Summer, 2003), there was an article headed *The Musicaladers - and more* in which your Editor described research carried out by him and Michael Crampton in Spokane. We had discovered that Bing took part in the grand reopening of the Clemmer Theater in May 1925 when he was part of a group called The Three Harmony Aces. We then relied on the following information from Al Rinker.

> The manager of the theater got a quartet together and wanted us to do a little stage presentation. We did, but the quartet wasn't very good. I was in the pit playing piano for the guys. The manager finally let the quartet go but he kept Bing. He thought he'd let Bing try it alone. I played in the pit for Bing and he did songs like "Red Hot Henry Brown." He'd sing and dance a little. We did this for a couple of weeks and then Bing came down into the pit and we started doing duets. . . . Bing had a little cymbal and I'd play piano

and sing with him. We stayed at the Clemmer Theater for a few more weeks. We were each making $30 a week. That was big money for us.

(Al Rinker, as quoted in *Bing Crosby, A Lifetime of Music*, page 9)

We noticed adverts for 'The Clemmer Entertainers' in the Spokane newspapers and wrongly assumed that these were Bing and Al. I duly shared this information with Bill Stimson, chair of the Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater. Bill has been carrying out further research and has discovered that the Clemmer Entertainers in fact comprised Bing and three other men - Wee Georgie Crittenden, Frank McBride and Lloyd Grinnell. Sometimes they were billed as 'The Clemmer Trio' or 'The Clemmer Entertainers' depending which men were used. Here is some of the information unearthed by Bill Stimson.

1925

August 14, Friday. The advert for the Clemmer is for the Lon Chaney film *The Unholy Three* and The Clemmer Trio (Frank McBride, Lloyd Grinnell and Harry Crosby) are shown as being presented with special stage effects.

August 22, Saturday. The Clemmer advert again shows the Clemmer Entertainers to be McBride, Grinnell and Crosby "in something new".

The Clemmer trio will appear on the picture program in a new cycle of songs and harmony numbers. Harry Crosby, Lloyd Grinnell and Frank McBride compose the group. Special stage scenery has been made for the novel presentation.

(*Spokesman-Review*, August 22)

August 29, Saturday. The film advertised at the Clemmer is Reginald Denny in *California Straight Ahead*. The Clemmer Trio remains on the bill.

Included on the program will be a musical sketch by the Clemmer trio composed of Crosby, McBride and Grinnell, and George Crittenden, Spokane's boy soprano, and Al Rinker. "California, Here I Come" will be the feature song presented by the group, who will use a "wayward" Ford in their comedy act. Several trio, quartet and quintet numbers will be included on their program.

(*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, August 29)

September 23, Wednesday. The Spokane Daily Chronicle reviews the Clemmer's presentation.

Clemmer Gives Fine Prologue

By far the best prologue performance of the Clemmer entertainers this fall is being presented this week at the Clemmer theater. Crosby, McBride and Chittendon (sic), composing the group, are singing their way into the hearts of the daily audiences.

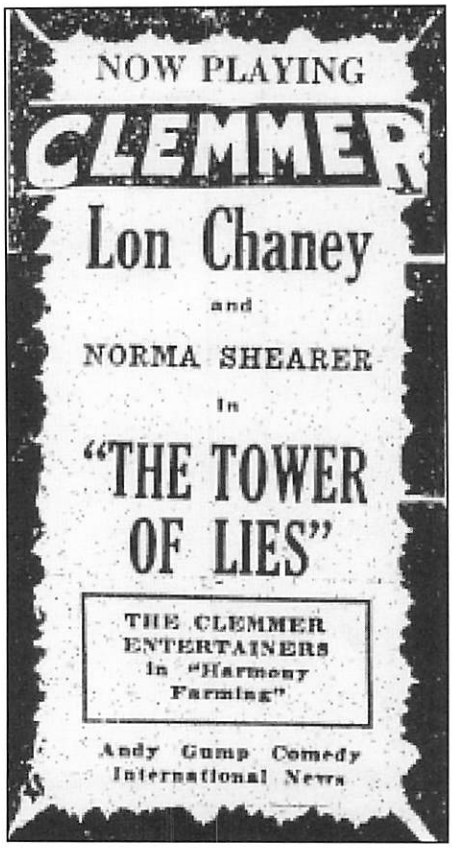
A South Sea Island setting furnishes the locale for the group of entertainers and their repertoire is based upon the plaintive melodies of the palm-fringed islands. An effective lighting arrangement adds greatly to the presentation.

"Lorraine of the Lions" is the picture showing. Patsy Ruth Miller is the featured star of the production.

(*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, September 23)

September 28, Monday. The Clemmer advert indicates that the Clemmer Entertainers will be featured in "A Carolina Morning". The film is *Sun Up!* starring Conrad Nagel and Pauline Starke.

October 3, Saturday. The Lon Chaney and Norma Shearer film *The Tower Of Lies* is at the Clemmer. The Clemmer Entertainers are featured in "Harmony Farming".



October 9, Friday. The billing at the Clemmer Theater reads "The Clemmer Entertainers in 'Autumn Time'".

October 16, Friday. The Clemmer advert includes Hoot Gibson in the comedy film *The Calgary Stampede*. The Clemmer Entertainers enter into the theme with a presentation called "Rodeo Days".

Just where the Clemmer entertainers got their live stock for "effect" in the current prologue presentation was the question of the audience Saturday night.

Bing Crosby evidently has the animal under his personal protection and keeping, judging by the "cowboy's" manner and affection showed him by his charge.

(*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, October 19)

October 23, Friday. The Clemmer advert promotes the film *The Storm Breaker* starring House Peters and it shows the Clemmer Entertainers in "Shipmates Ashore". It is said that this is "their farewell week".

October 29, Thursday. The final appearance at the Clemmer Theater

Presumably Al Rinker always accompanied the Clemmer Entertainers from the pit which is why he does not receive many mentions in the press coverage. The Entertainers obviously did sketches (often linked to the main film) as well as sing and this all contributed to Bing's development as an entertainer.

Our thanks to Bill Stimson for sharing this research with us.

Bill has also sent us the following report on more recent happenings at the former Clemmer which is of course now known as The Bing Crosby Theater.

Malcolm Macfarlane

A Crosby appears at 'The Bing'.

Howard Crosby sang songs made famous by his uncle at a benefit on March 14, 2008. The show was held, appropriately, in the recently re-named Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane.

Howard was backed by his band of seven jazz musicians who have early Crosby music as a specialty. Their aim, Howard said, was to render the sound of Bing's 1930s music as faithfully as possible.

Howard began his show by saying it was a thrill to walk on to the very stage where Bing began his career in 1925. Bing and Al Rinker performed in the theater – then known as the Clemmer Theater – for five months before leaving Spokane to try their luck in Hollywood in November of 1925.

Howard, a businessman who lives in Walla Walla, Washington, about 100 miles southwest of Spokane, organized the benefit for the support of the Holy Names Music Center in Spokane. The show was dedicated to Howard's sister, Sister Dolores Crosby, a Holy Names nun who died in Spokane last year, and also to Sister Evelyn Ferguson, who died in 2005.

Helen, known to all as "Dixie", was born in 1934 in Spokane. She entered the convent there in 1952 and for the rest of her life taught in Catholic schools in the Pacific Northwest. She taught mostly theater, music and debate, the same interests her famous uncle had in his school years.

Sister Dixie's fellow nuns remember her for a mischievous sense of humor not unlike Bing's. They described her as the life of the convent.

Howard described his sister as full of life and love. Whenever she noticed that her appearance at a social gathering, in her flowing black nun's garments, put a damper on the revelry, Dixie would put everyone at ease by announcing "Don't worry, I'm the wicked nun!"

Howard said Bing was extremely proud that Dixie had devoted her life to God. "Bing would give her anything she asked for." Of course, he said, as a nun, she did not ask for much.

But once when a delegation of the sisters were traveling to a conference in California, Dixie took them all to stay at Uncle Bing's mansion. Though Bing was traveling, the nuns were treated a sumptuous dinner some have not forgotten to this day.

Howard Crosby outside the Bing Crosby Theater.

Howard organized the show to honor his late sister's interest in music education. All the performances were donated and ticket proceeds will go to help support the Holy Names Music Center, which educates around 1,000 child musicians.

Besides his own rendition of Crosby songs, Howard brought in two other acts. Famed Seattle harpist Gwen Lyons played traditional Irish tunes in honor of St. Patrick's Day and the band "Penrose Lane" performed a medley of Beatles songs.

Howard, who was close to Bing and often golfed with him, got a standing ovation from the packed theater where Bing appeared 82 years earlier.

Bill Stimson

Bing In Vancouver (continued)

In our last edition, we mentioned that a time capsule which had been buried under the Sunset Community Centre was due to be opened. Well, this has now taken place and Walter Schultz wrote to tell us about it.

We opened the time capsule today. It included some Bing memorabilia inside, including a few new photos of Bing at City Hall receiving the gold key to the City of Vancouver and a few photos from his Vancouver radio show performance. There were also two film reels inside the time capsule. One was a 16mm home movie on the construction of Sunset without anything on Bing. The second one is a 35mm film which has footage of Bing Crosby around Vancouver in 1948. He's golfing and preparing for his radio show and there is a clip of him wearing the Indian costume.

Bing in his Indian costume as he was given life membership in the Squamish tribe as "Chief Thunder Voice".

Our national broadcaster ran a small clip from the event on the local 12 noon news.

Attached is a letter from our founding President, Stan Thomas. Stan was the man who convinced Bing Crosby to come to Vancouver. I thought you might find his letter from 1949 interesting.

Walter Schultz

(Editor: Walter was also interviewed on CBC Radio and gave Bing's contribution to the building of the original Sunset Community Centre a real boost. The letter from Stan Thomas was inside the capsule and is reproduced below. It was of course written at the time that Bing was the biggest thing in show business and when there was real fear about the atom bomb.)

To you who open the "Time Capsule"

In this container are several items which portray, to some extent, some of the many projects which contributed toward the raising of funds with which to build and equip Sunset Memorial centre.

The enclosed photographs tell their own story, but that of Bing Crosby does not tell all that that great American has done for the people of this community.

Bing and his party of twenty-one artists, musicians and technicians, travelled from Hollywood to Vancouver by train a 48-hour journey in 1948, in order to stage a benefit, show on our behalf in the Vancouver Forum (Hastings Park.) The record-breaking show was held on September 22nd.1948 and was subsequently broadcast coast-to-coast over the ABC (American Broadcasting Company) network. A transcription of the Bing Crosby Show is in the Archives of the City of Vancouver.

The show at the Forum grossed $32,000.00 and enriched our Building Fund by approximately $26.000.00. Bing would accept nothing for his services, 'nor to cover cost of transportation.

It has been said of Bing Crosby, that he has brought more pleasure to more people than any other living person - a fitting tribute! It is our belief that Bing's voice may be enjoyed by those of you who open this capsule, as he is undoubtedly the most popular vocalist of our time.

Bing fishing with Stan Thomas.

Some people today, refer to this as the start of the "Atomic Age" You who open this, will know whether or not our scientists, after successfully splitting the atom, developed Atomic Power for the benefit of all mankind or - Heaven forbid - permitted its use in the destruction of present-day civilizations.

Stan Thomas
President, Sunset Community Association
December 11, 1949

(Editor: Walter Schultz also sent us a copy of the Sunset Review from November 1948 and we reproduce some extracts from this.)

Maze Of Details

. . .First to arrive in the city in connection with the show was Perry Botkin, Musical Supervisor for the show. Perry contacted local musicians and the Musicians' Union officials in addition to making other arrangements of that nature. A week later, Murdo McKenzie, co-producer of the Bing Crosby program, arrived on the scene. From then on, the Reception Committee was in high gear!

Bing, Bill Morrow and most of his party arrived via Great Northern, on Monday evening, September 20. An advance party composed of Hal Malone of the News-Herald, Fred Bass, representing the radio station; Charlie Defleux, Public Relations Chairman; and Stan Thomas of Sunset Memorial Centre, boarded the train at Blaine and briefed Bing briefly on what to expect at the station.

The scene which greeted Bing on his arrival on the station platform, however, was not as it had been planned! Apparently, as the train came to a halt in the station, hundreds of fans who, a few minutes before were nowhere in sight, ran around behind the station to the platform and bedlam resulted. Perhaps you, also, heard the radio broadcast of that portion of the reception!

Acting-Mayor Miller, Chief Constable Mulligan, Alderman Cornett and Ed. Arnatt were introduced to Bing before the radio mikes, stationed on the platform. The ever-growing crowd surged around, trying to catch a glimpse of Der Bingle. The Police Pipe Band struck up a march, two burly policemen fell in behind, Bing was flanked by two tall and extremely competent-looking detectives, and, followed by the Mayor, Chief Mulligan and Stan Thomas, who in turn were followed by Alderman Cornett, Ed. Arnatt, Stan Thorpe of Shaughnessy Golf Club, then more police and hundreds of cheering fans.

They started down the platform to the station rotunda, preceded by scores of cameramen—professional and amateur—whose flash-bulbs, particularly those of the latter group, were set off at times dangerously close to the eyes of our distinguished guest. As the official party neared the rotunda, the cheering of thousands of citizens of all ages, rose in a mighty crescendo. Sunset Executive and Ladies' Auxiliary members, standing in line at the station entrance caught a fleeting glimpse of Bing as he was guided into the building,

Bing flanked by the detectives.

As Bing entered the over-crowded rotunda, the cheering reached a mighty roar. Men and women, particularly the latter, reached out in an effort to touch or grab the King of the Crooners. The crowd surged through the police lines at the curb as thousands of happy Vancouverities pressed forward for one quick glimpse of their idol of stage and radio.

Cries of "There he is!" "It's him!" "Hi, Bing!" "I touched him!" and "I pinched him!" etc., etc. were heard from many lining the aisle through which Bing and his escort forced their way. After the minute or so which seemed much longer—so much appeared to have happened from the time Bing entered through one doorway and made his exit through the other—Bing, Acting-Mayor Miller and Thomas found themselves in the Mayor's limousine. Then the fun began all over again. Hundreds of fans, crowded beyond the sidewalk onto the roadway in front of the station, and still hoping for at least a peek at Der Bingle, blocked the roadway ahead of the Mayor's car. Only the Herculean efforts of five or six stalwart policemen, who literally pulled the official car through the milling, cheering crowd, made it possible for the driver to finally put the car into gear and, preceded by a motorcycle escort, whisk Bing and the others to the hotel.

Another crowd waited at the hotel, both outside and inside. But Bing was soon settled comfortably in his suite where he kidded the other members of his party as they arrived.

Tuesday was a busy day for Bing and his party. Most of it has already been amply covered by the press and radio stations. Rehearsal at the Orpheum in the morning. The Civic reception, presentation of the golden "Key to the City" and the slate totem pole by the Acting-Mayor in a driving rain on the steps of the City Hall.

Bing receives a slate totem pole from the Acting-Mayor.

Bing, singing most unexpectedly, while accompanied by the Firemen's Band, his famous theme-song, "In the Blue of the Night," (sic) and the crowd there, under their umbrellas and galoshes, loved every minute of it! Never before, and we doubt if ever again, will such a distinguished and charming person ever sing on the steps of our City Hall.

Indicative of the informality and free-and-easy manner of our star from Hollywood, was his suggestion that those accompanying him on his trip to turn the first sod at Sunset, join him over a sandwich at a wayside restaurant. (It they arrived too early at Sunset, many would be disappointed and Bing was aware of it.) Needless to say, the waitresses had the thrill of a lifetime. Likewise, the twenty-odd members of a middle-aged ladies' club who were dining there at the time. "Ooohs" and "a-ahs" were all over the place!

Then came the trip out Fraser Avenue, renamed "BINGSWAY" in Bing's honor. He was deeply appreciative of the honor. And on to Sunset, where more than a thousand had braved one of the wettest days of 1948 to be on hand when Bing operated a large bull-dozer to officially turn the first sod on the site of Sunset Memorial Centre. Many of those present had been there two hours and more, and great was the roar when Der Bingle stepped from his car onto the sodden field.

At Sunset, as if throwing a challenge right back into the teeth of old Jupe Pluvius, Bing broke out in a rich rendition as only Bing can sing, of "Blue Skies." On the bull-dozer he was a panic. When Chief Mathias tried to explain the faces on the twenty-toot totem pole which Sunset Memorial had presented to Bing, the ever-ready Crosby wanted to know how come so many Hopes on the one pole. Chief Andy Paull's daughter Yvonne was on hand to present Bing with a beautiful white moose-hide shopping bag for Mrs. Crosby. Bing liked it: said he'd keep his girdle in it.

The great show at the Forum will go down in the history of Vancouver as the most sparkling presentation of its kind ever staged here. Records fell like ten-pins! Largest attendance ever recorded at any similar affair here! Largest "gross" and "net" for any single performance. The first time the top man in show business had ever appeared at a public performance in Canada, west of Toronto. Highest "gross" on first-day ticket sales and, we believe on Wednesday ticket sales also. The price scale set a new "high" for this city.

The show itself was superb! The huge audience loved every phase of it, from the Indian Chief ceremony, right through to the final curtain. Bing and his guests, Ray Milland, Marilyn Maxwell and Bill Gargan, were at their best. The script was a scream. The whole show was a dream come true, not only for Sunset Memorial Centre, but, also, for thousands of Vancouverites who, for the first time, were seeing their idol in person on a Vancouver stage!

Thursday and Friday were given over to fishing, golf, shopping and sight-seeing, etc., for the various members of the party. Bing indulged in his favorite sport at world-famous Capilano and is believed to have enjoyed his playing there very much.

After the riotous welcome which marked Bing's arrival here, it was felt by the Reception Committee that he was entitled to a quiet and more orderly sendoff. As a result, only a few members of the Sunset Executive were quietly informed as to time of leaving and they were overjoyed at the opportunity to see him off at the station that Saturday morning.

Summing up the activities of the Bing Crosby Reception Committee, it is estimated that more than a dozen meetings of one kind and another were held prior to Bing's arrival; hundreds of phone calls, many of them long distance, were put through, more than a score of wires were sent and received, dozens of letters were written prior to his arrival and more than a hundred were completed before the committee wrote "finis" to one of the biggest undertakings this city has ever seen.

Sunset Memorial Centre repeats: "THANKS A MILLION, BING!"

And to all who co-operated: our grateful thanks.

(Editor: Amazing! What a nice picture the article creates of what was probably a simpler time. Bing wrote to Stan Thomas on his return to Hollywood.)

Hollywood, October 19, 1948.

Dear Stan:

As you can judge, we had a wonderful time—I

mean all of us. The genuine warmth of feeling which the Canadian people express always awakens a great friendship for them in my heart. Their motives seem so genuine, and their hospitality so real, that it's always a pleasure to go to Canada.

If in some way we were able to help the Centre and get the drive rolling for you, we are very grateful that the opportunity was allowed.

Expect to see Jimmie McLarnin tomorrow for a golf game, and will have a chat with him and give him all the information about the various things that happened on the appearance in Vancouver. I know he'll be interested on hearing this first-hand.

Warmest regards,

Bing

P.S.—I hope in the near future to be making another trip to Vancouver for golf and fishing, at which time I will anticipate seeing you again.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $16.00 US each which includes postage. With the strengthening of the Canadian currency against the US dollar, Canadian purchasers should now pay CAN $16.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Ron Cannatella, P.O. Box 1031, Lacombe, Louisiana 70445, USA (Email: RonnieCann@aol.com)

"I've been trying to replace some of my original Bing Crosby movie posters that were destroyed in my former New Orleans home during the 2005 Hurricane Katrina flood disaster. I've attached a photo of two of my favorite Crosby posters that were lost. The 14 x 36 insert posters for *High Society* and *Connecticut Yankee* were displayed in my home office filled with original Crosby memorabilia. These posters were in exceptional mint condition...not folded - rolled and framed with glare resistant glass, acid free materials and linen backed!

Everything that was left behind in the office (and entire home) was history when the water rushed in. This photo (below) was taken in my home office just a few weeks before Hurricane Katrina's arrival. The wall that is pictured faced the street and the water that rushed in actually reached the ceiling in this room during the Katrina storm surge. Everything seen in this photo was found many weeks after the storm on the floor buried under the remaining muddy water. Please keep your eyes open for these specific two Crosby posters for me. If ever you see these two original posters in mint condition for sale anywhere at a reasonable price, please let me know. EBay never ever has listings for these! I'd really like to replace them. These were my favorite Crosby posters.

I am also seeking replacements of three specific Crosby books that I have been unable to find since 2005: Bing Crosby's Road To Hollywood (hardcover with yellow dust jacket), Bing Crosby: A Voice For All Seasons, and the fantastic Lionel Pairpoint ICC Radio Directory.

I'm also trying to replace several favorite lost Crosby videos on DVD. I'm having a hard time in locating excellent quality replacement copies of two shows that he did with Pearl Bailey: The Pearl Bailey Show (1971) with Andy Williams and Louis Armstrong; Bing Crosby & His Friends (1974), also Coolin' It with Dean Martin (1970) with Dean Martin, the Making Movies TV Special (1968) with Diana Ross, Jose Feliciano, Bob Hope. Donna and I will sincerely appreciate your assistance in locating any of these items. Please pass the word around among fellow ICC members. We'd love to restore these to our Crosby collection that we've been rebuilding since 2005.

(Editor: Members will recall from BING #141 how Ron

lost most of his collection because of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Ron will appreciate any help members can give.)

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal price. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances.

Art Evans, 8445 Walker Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19136, USA. Telephone (215) 333-2678; E-mail Arthur.evans3@verizon.net

Wanted - Will pay top dollar for the sheet music "WA-DA-DA" featured by Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys in 1928 with photograph of Bing, Harry Barris and Al Rinker on the cover.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

John Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD, UK (email: carson1812@blueyonder.co.uk)

Our enterprising friend, John Marshall, has more DVDs available in his Footloose series, as follows:

The Summer Follies at Footloose £10, Bob Crosby's 50th Anniversary Jazz Concert at Balboa Park 1985 £8.00, 160 Minutes with Skitch Henderson & A Bing Interview in the Palladium Bar 1979 £8.00.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, contact Ray.

Redmond Nostalgia Company, P O Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073-0082, USA. (Tel: (425) 774-1819, Fax (425) 774-8076, web site: http://www.redmondnostalgia.com/

e-mail: redmondnostalgia@aol.com)

David Kiner offers a comprehensive list of 422 Bing Crosby CDs. Each CD is one hour long containing two 30 minute radio programs, unless otherwise noted. All programs have been professionally re-mastered for excellent sound quality. All CDs are professionally printed and come sealed in cases with printed inserts.

See the company's web site for details of what is available.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) http://www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for imported CDs from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net –

website: http://bingsfriendsandcollectors.org/crosbyhomeindex.html

Regular newsletters are issued.

The Australian Bing Crosby Club

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

The society has recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and it still has thirteen of the original members extant. Regular newsletters are issued and the society is holding film nights this year on August 19, October 21 and December 16.

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.mcckc.edu/~crosby

A wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

www.BingCrosby.com

This site has been launched under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows and great clips from Bings Films.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

This is a most impressive web site maintained by our member, Crissi Newton. Well worth a look.

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698

e-mail: gerry@stonestreet13.freeserve.co.uk,

website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune)
Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £18 for the UK, £22 for Europe and £32.50 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England. (www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: editor@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus picture pages, CD reviews, readers' letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 rpm collectors

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK (Tel: 01594 842991)

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an International Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/ - see also http://www.mikescaife.btinternet.co.uk/ for Mike Scaife's Scottish branch website)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743). A bi-monthly magazine called "Perfectly Frank" is issued.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

1. Remembering Bing: Bing Crosby and Australian Entertainment,

By Graham Pascoe, 587 pages, illustrated, $AUS58, including postage and handling within Australia; distributed by Graham Pascoe, 211 William Street, Bathurst, NSW, 2795 Australia (email: gpascoe@tadaust.org.au)

Peter Wolfe reviews this new book by ICC member Graham Pascoe.

Bing Down Under

Like Django and Miles, Bing Crosby belongs in that exclusive musical fraternity where last names are redundant. Rightly called "the biggest multimedia star of the first half of the 20th century," Bing enjoyed fabulous success. In 1941, Irving Berlin refused to sign on with Paramount Studios unless Bing was already under contract. Bing's pulling power extended into the century. The year after his 1977 death saw the debut on LP of his 1932-34 Brunswick pressings. And to this day he holds the record for number-one chart hits in Australia. a land he never visited, eclipsing the Beatles and Elvis Presley.

Much of his success came from his modesty. A preference for blending into his surroundings helped him sell an incredible 300 million records. Oddly, the same ability to melt inside a lyric always tricked his fans into thinking that they, too (okay, we), could sing with his rhythmical assurance. They soon discovered that the unobtrusiveness of Bing's singing style masked the hard work that produced it. His agile, fluent singing brought to popular music what Will Friedwald called "hidden technique," a musical delivery that's simple without being obvious or easy to attain. Bing's originality becomes more astonishing as one appreciates the simplicity by which it's expressed. This irony reminds us of the toil invested in all music that's easy and pleasant to listen to without sounding trite.

An understanding of the impact of Bing's popularity with Australians calls for a book like Pascoe's. In 1943, when Australia's population roughly equaled that of New York City, three of Bing's movies were running concurrently in downtown Sydney, while the radio airwaves in Melbourne devoted more than six hours of

programming each week to his music.

Such data charm Pascoe, whose book began as a paper for a Crosby conference held in 2002 at Long Island's Hofstra University. The phenomenal research that grew the paper into a 600-page classic starts paying dividends straightaway. For instance, Pascoe builds a context for the growth and formation of Bing's Australian career. He discusses the "crooning controversy" put in place by Australia's conservative musical tastes. Another hurdle: the Depression. The launching of Bing's career Down Under takes on new meaning when projected against the economic woes of the day. The stock market crash of 1929 rendered 25% of Australia's work force jobless in 1931 (the date Bing first recorded his theme song, "Where the Blue of the Night"). Even the employed saw their weekly wages shrink by 10%; buying a new 78 rpm record translated to about two hours of labor for the ordinary worker.

Financial hardship all but sank Australia's entertainment business. But while Pascoe tallies the losses that zapped Australia's cinema, he also evokes, with a poignancy reminiscent of John Updike and Woody Allen, both the grandeur and the elegance of Depression-Age movie palaces with their sparkling chandeliers, marble statues, and filigreed plaster columns.

Informative and entertaining, *Remembering Bing* both holds its focus and generates drive. One of the book's great strengths stems from its careful selection. No cold, dutiful slog, *Remembering Bing* portrays with clarity the pop music tradition that its eponym was revolutionizing. The book has something to delight the most ardent Bingophile. For instance, its meaty 40-page back-matter section gives the production dates of Bing's radio broadcasts in Melbourne and Sydney from 1938-59; lists his TV appearances from 1959-2007; and catalogues his Sydney and Melbourne movie bookings by date and theater from 1930-66. But the most valuable part of the book's Appendix is its Discography, which gives the release dates, the years deleted, and, when figures were available, the total sales of Bing's 78 and 45 rpm singles sold in Australia between 1927 and 1982.

Remembering Bing reminds us that art has always transcended both linguistic and national borders. Besides honoring Bing's legacy in a country he never saw, Pascoe's subtle, penetrating book assumes a life of its own that popular culturists everywhere will have to reckon with as they ponder the impact of mass entertainment upon the collective psyche of its audiences.

Peter Wolfe

(Editor: Peter Wolfe teaches English at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

The book is only available from Graham Pascoe whose details are given above. Anyone interested can email him for a flyer and order form. The cost for overseas buyers is $AUS 72, which includes surface mail post.

Howard Crosby, writing on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum, mentioned another new book with Bing connections.)

2. The Match: The Day the Game of Golf Changed Forever

by Mark Frost. 272 pages, hardcover, published by Hyperion. ISBN-10: 1401302785. Cost $24.95 (but about $16 from Amazon)

I just finished reading a magnificent book by Mark Frost, entitled "The Match." It is the story of a friendly golf match at Cypress Point on January 9th, 1956, just before that year's Crosby, between Ken Venturi and Harvie Ward, the two best amateurs of the day, against Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson. It is a remarkable story, extremely well written, and Uncle Bing figures very prominently in it. As Ken Venturi says on the flyleaf, if this story were fiction, nobody would ever believe it.

Mark Frost also devotes the better part of Chapter 2 to a brief history of Bing's career, pretty much accurately stating his accomplishments, and calling him the real "King of Pop", and the precursor of Sinatra and Presley and all who followed. It was refreshing to see a modern day writer get this part of the history correct.

Howard Crosby

(Editor: Next comes Martin McQuade who has picked up a few points from a new book.)

3. Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking. By Eric Lax. Published by Knopf. ISBN-10: 0375415335 416 pages, Hardcover, $19.80 from Amazon.

Conversations with Woody Allen, a book length interview with essayist Eric Lax was published in late 2007 by Alfred A. Knopf. At one point the author poses a question to Mr. Allen.

In the tribute to Bob Hope that you narrated for the Film Society of Lincoln Center, you said that after seeing Hope and Crosby on camelback singing, "Like Webster's dictionary we're Morocco bound" that "I knew immediately what I wanted to do with my life." It's a great line but how true is it?

Of course... Right up until my teens I tried to act like Hope and make the jokes and snap off the one liners effortlessly.

This question and response recalls a memory from that long ago gala evening in April, 1979 when Dick Cavett (pardon me for the correction, Mr. Lax) read Mr. Allen's script for the compilation which was screened at Avery Fisher Hall. Elsewhere Mr. Allen is asked about any unrealized film projects.

I guess I'm starting to feel - because I'll be seventy-

one this year – that I'm never going to do that Bob Hope movie where I glide through it in every direction. I always wanted to do a road picture with someone, maybe (Diane) *Keaton or another comedian, like the Hope – Crosby road picture, not* [laughs] *a road picture like Easy Rider. If a studio came to me and said they'd like to do a picture in the Hope and Crosby tradition, I could really make it great. The fatal error people always make when they update pictures is overproduce them, overelaborate them. But I wouldn't do that. I'd make one that was in the tradition. It would be a funny movie, but no one's going to be interested* [laughs], *either making it or coming to see it.*

It is hoped that Mr. Allen may summon the motivation and wherewithal to pursue this most intriguing possibility.

Martin McQuade

4. Julie Andrews: An Intimate Biography

by Richard Stirling. Published by Portrait. ISBN-10: 0749951621 ISBN-13: 978-0749951627.
Paperback: 384 pages. £5.99 from Amazon

Your editor often browses through a book shop looking in the indices of show business books for mentions of Bing. In leafing through this book recently, I found an entry about the making of *High Tor* which contained the surprising suggestion that Bing may have proposed marriage to Julie whilst making the TV film. It seems that he also gave her a ring inscribed "Julie, Thanks, Bing." The film was made in November 1955 at a time when Bing was courting Kathryn. Typically, the writer does not give a source for the allegation. Whatever next?

THE JAZZIN' BING AT 105

It's a real pleasure to welcome Wig back to our pages.

LIVELY MEMORIES

More than a half-century ago, when I was an undergraduate student at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, one of the highly popular jazz bands of the day on radio and records was a rather unusual group from California called "The Firehouse Five Plus Two". Playing a boisterous, often raucous, version of old-time favorites in the Dixieland style, this carefree group was also noted for the fact that it was composed largely of individuals who were not full-time professional musicians at all, but rather men whose day jobs were at the Walt Disney Studios in Hollywood. They had formed their band almost by accident, largely as the result of their mutual love for the small group style of jazz music which had been making a comeback in the United States following World War II, a style that critics had dubbed the "West Coast Revival".

Ever alert to such trends, Bing Crosby featured The Firehouse Five Plus Two a number of times on his Chesterfield radio shows in 1950 and 1951 to enthusiastic acclaim. On each such occasion, after the band played one of their popular favorites, Bing joined them for an upbeat version of an old warhorse, and their happy-go-lucky duets became Crosby collector classics of the era through transcription copies of the broadcasts.

Bing and the Andrews Sisters with the Firehouse Five Plus Two on the Chesterfield Show broadcast March 29, 1950

Recently, I had welcomed the release by Jasmine Records of Britain of a series of CDs entitled "The Whole Story of the Firehouse Five Plus Two", which I can strongly recommend to ICC members who enjoy their type of uninhibited Dixieland jazz. And even more important, volume two in the Jasmine series contains excerpts from three of their radio broadcasts with Bing, which are not to be missed if you aren't familiar with their historic collaborations.

AN INSPIRATION

When I received my copies of the Jasmine CDs, I had what is commonly referred to as an "inspiration". With Bing's forthcoming 105th birthday falling on a Saturday this year, I thought what an excellent opportunity that would offer for my longtime friend, Rob Bamberger, to feature an hour of Bing's jazzier studio recordings on his weekly radio program known as "Hot Jazz Saturday Night".

Rob Bamberger is a highly-supportive member of the ICC who often plays Bing's recordings on his popular show, frequently utilizing selections from the chronological CD series produced by John McNicholas on his Jonzo Records label.

Rob even once had the temerity to have me as a guest on his program to talk with him about Bing's career at the time of the CD release of "Bing Crosby: A Centennial Anthology of His Decca Recordings" that I

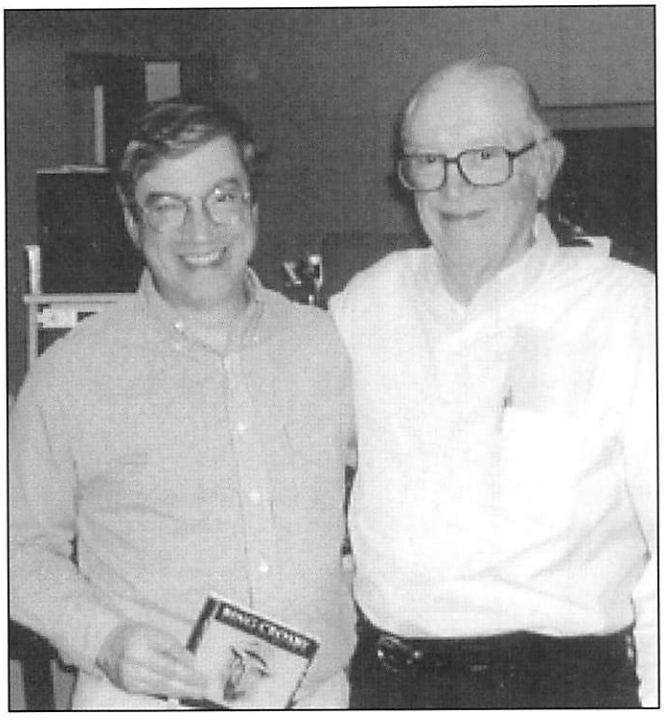
compiled for Universal Music to celebrate Bing's 100th birthday in 2003. ICC members who still have copies of the summer 2003 issue of BING magazine handy (No. 134) can find a full account of that broadcast, if you have a mind to re-read my description of it.

In any event, with The Firehouse Five Plus Two and Bing's 105th birthday in mind, I telephoned Rob Bamberger to ask if he would be interested in devoting an hour of his May 3rd program to Bing's jazz recordings for a change, while—for once—avoiding the usual suspects such as "Swinging On A Star", "Don't Fence Me In", "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" and "White Christmas". I said that I thought his listeners might enjoy that kind of approach which would give them a very different view of Bing's recording career.

Rob not only readily agreed to do so, but also added that he thought Bing deserved two hours of air time—not just one—on this occasion, and he would be pleased to work with me to select the songs to be played in honor of his birthday. Naturally, I thought that was a great idea!

HOT JAZZ SATURDAY NIGHT

For fellow ICC members who might not remember, let me digress to tell you a little more about Rob Bamberger. Rob has been a warmly-regarded fixture on Washington, D.C. radio for more than a quarter century. He is not, technically, a professional radio broadcaster, but rather a so-called volunteer at American University's public station, WAMU, located at 88.5 on the FM dial.



Wig with Rob. (left)

Even though Rob is a full-time career employee at the Library of Congress, he manages to devote many hours each week to the preparation of his popular Saturday evening radio program, on which he mainly features recordings of vintage jazz, big band swing and vocalists from the 1920s, /30s and '40s. Occasionally, Rob also ventures into the more modern era to include latter-day revival bands and singers as well, but definitely no rock 'n' roll and the like, thank goodness.

Thoroughly researched and intelligently presented, each of Rob's programs is an indispensable look-back at the golden age of popular music, the likes of which are seldom found on radio today as we all struggle through the increasingly barren wasteland that passes for so-called popular music in the 21st century.

Rob Bamberger's weekly "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" is heard not only in the Washington metropolitan area on WAMU-FM but also is carried internationally on National Public Radio (NPR WORLDWIDE) and its radio satellite and cable affiliates. It also is broadcast to our armed forces around the world on the American Forces Network. ICC members who would like further information about picking up "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" outside of the United States should contact National Public Radio on the internet. I assure you it will be well worth the effort. And if you would like additional details about each of Rob's programs as they are presented, just click on www.hotjazz.org for weekly updates.

PROGRAM PLANNING

In response to a kind invitation from Rob Bamberger and his delightful wife, Chris, I spent the evening with them at their home two weeks before Bing's birthday to plan Rob's forthcoming program. I gave Rob an outline of some of my favorite recordings for his consideration, and also brought along a number of CDs from my collection that he did not have in his own. Anything on the 51 volumes of the Jonzo series was of course already available to Rob, but in addition to The Firehouse Five Plus Two CDs on Jasmine, I also took along the Bing/Buddy Cole recordings of "Some Fine Old Chestnuts" / "New Tricks", "Bing With A Beat" with Bob Scobey and most importantly to my mind, the almost forgotten LP that Bing made in 1960 with Louis Armstrong for MGM Records that has only been reissued to date in Australia on the EMI/Axis CD label.

Rob was not familiar with either the Bing/Buddy Cole tracks or the "Bing and Satchmo" album, and he was very pleased to add both of them to his planned play list. Rob had expressed an interest in some of Bing's film soundtracks as well, so I also provided him with the series of CD transfers of movie songs compiled for Jasmine Records by Geoff Milne for his consideration. More than enough for a two-hour radio program, to be sure!

The result of all of this planning was, in my perhaps not-fully-objective opinion, an unusual and rewarding exploration of a major facet of Bing's talent that often has been overlooked. Beyond his well-known ballads, movie songs and popular hits, Bing the jazz singer is seldom remembered today. But for me, this aspect of his talent was, and remains, a major part of his unsurpassed musical legacy. Unlike almost any other popular vocalist

that you might name, Bing's style was strongly rooted in jazz from the beginning, which he continued to demonstrate to the very end of his career.

So with so much to choose from, what did Rob Bamberger decide to feature during his unique look at Bing Crosby the jazz singer on his 105th birthday?

AND HERE'S BING!

As is his custom, Rob Bamberger began his program with an unannounced selection, Bing's "Some Of These Days", made with Frank Trumbauer's orchestra in 1932. This was followed by a somewhat eclectic mix of recordings ranging from 1957's "Some Sunny Day" with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band to one of Bing's hottest solos with Gus Arnheim, "One More Time" from 1931. In between, Rob featured songs with the Mills Brothers ("My Honey's Lovin' Arms") and Connee Boswell ("Yes, Indeed!), "Honeysuckle Rose" with Buddy Cole, and a rare Dixieland-styled recording with John Scott Trotter, "Nobody's Sweetheart Now" from 1952. The first of Bing's air shots with The Firehouse Five Plus Two ("Everybody Loves My Baby") came along at this point as well.

After a brief environmental announcement (WAMU is, after all, a "public" radio station), Rob went back to the beginning of Bing's recording career to play two of his early solos with Paul Whiteman, "Muddy Water" and their imaginative treatment of "Ol' Man River" from "Show Boat". Also included in this segment were two additional duets with the Mills Brothers, "Dinah" and "Shine", Bing's historic version of "St. Louis Blues" with Duke Ellington's orchestra and his irrepressible "Sweet Georgia Brown" with Isham Jones.

Following a second announcement about WAMU's weekly broadcasts on Sunday evenings of Old-Time Radio shows, Rob Bamberger played three further up-tempo duets that Bing and Connee Boswell recorded for Decca, "Basin Street Blues", "Between 18th And 19th On Chestnut Street", and "Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?)".

Rob then switched to two of his own favorite film songs, "Smarty" (from 1937's "Double Or Nothing") and the title song from 1940's "Rhythm On The River" (on which Bing plays the drums and sings with Wingy Manone's jazz band). These were followed by two other gems by Bing and The Firehouse Five Plus Two, "Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue" and "Blues My Naughtie Sweetie Gave To Me".

As a change-of-pace, the program then moved to a trio of 1957 recordings with Bob Scobey, "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter", "Exactly Like You" and "Dream A Little Dream Of Me". These were followed by a series of Bing's mid-1950 recordings with Buddy Cole, "I Never Knew (I Could Love Anybody), "Sleepy Time Gal", "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby", "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea", and "Avalon".

For his last set, Rob chose three of Bing's rarely-heard 1960 duets with Satchmo, "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans", "Lazy River" and "At The Jazz Band Ball". "Lazy River" has the distinction of technically never having been released commercially, appearing only in 1963 on an LP sold worldwide by the United Nations for charitable purposes.

Rob then concluded his remarkable broadcast with "After You've Gone" which Bing waxed in 1946 with Eddie Condon's New York-based jazz band, a fitting close to no less than 33 memorable recordings spanning three decades of Bing's career, many of which you almost never hear on the radio any more.

Thanks Bing, and thanks to Rob Bamberger for a truly unforgettable treat for Hot Jazz Saturday Night listeners that I was very pleased to be a part of. And thanks also to The Firehouse Five Plus Two who, in a sense, were the cause of it all.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
May 3, 2008

Celluloid Crosby

This is a departure from my usual examination of a Bing film. Instead this article is devoted to a film song. It follows the life of Bing's first big ballad hit. The song also happens to be the title of one of Bing's early films. You've probably guessed the song already, but here are a few clues:

* Bing helped write the song's lyrics
* It featured in four of Bing's early films
* Every one of Bing's sponsored radio shows featured it at sometime or other between 1931 and 1951
* It was probably Bing's first million selling record

The song is "I Surrender Dear".

The first studio recording of the song took place in Los Angeles on 19th January, 1931. Bing contributed to the words of Gordon Clifford which run alongside the music composed by Harry Barris. The ASCAP database shows only Clifford and Barris as the writers but the sheet music does indicate that the song was suggested and introduced by Bing. Fred Reynolds' study of Bing's recorded work regards it as "the first really great Crosby ballad". It was strongly associated with Crosby right from the off and in April of that year it became the title of the first of the six shorts that Bing made for Mack Sennett. By the time *I Surrender Dear* was showing in cinemas in the U.S.A in September of 1931 Bing had featured a parody of the song in his second Sennett short. That short, *One More Chance,* began with Bing demonstrating a washing machine whilst singing "Magic C.O.D" to the tune of "I Surrender Dear". When that film reached cinema screens in November, Bing's Victor recording of "I Surrender Dear" had come to the attention of William Paley, president of CBS radio. He had been sent a copy of the song by Bing's brother Everett, who was acting as Crosby's manager. Paley liked what he heard and Bing made his radio debut in his own show on 2nd September.

It didn't take long for Bing to establish himself as a foremost radio crooner, the role in which Paramount cast him for *The Big Broadcast* (1932). That film opened with Bing arriving late at the radio station and to sing a couple of lines of "I Surrender Dear". The song's third annual cinematic outing occurred as part of a Crosby medley featured in *College Humor* (1933).

The folks who stayed home during those early years' of Bing cinematic career could hear him on his first sponsored radio show. Tobacco companies topped and tailed the Crosby radio series which featured "I Surrender Dear". Cremo Cigars had him hawking their product in 1931 and 1932. "I Surrender Dear" was Bing's selected closing song on three of those programmes. The following year Chesterfield cigarettes took him on for the first time. He was on the air in a series they called "The Music That Satisfies" for about four months and "I Surrender Dear" received an airing in February of 1933.

Radio sponsorship continued with Woodbury soap. "I Surrender Dear" was placed in a May, 1935 programme. That same year Bing began starring in The Kraft Music Hall and the third broadcast for the cheese company found "I Surrender Dear" included in a Crosby medley.

At the end of the song's first decade of its life, there was a recording gap to be plugged. That was because the song was not in the Decca catalogue. The omission was rectified when Bing re-recorded it in March of 1939. Thereafter, it was necessary to specify which version of the Crosby recording you wanted when you went to purchase the 78.

We now come to Bing's only appearance in a Soundie. Soundies were found on what can best be described as video juke boxes. 1,800 were available between 1940 and 1946. They were to be found on Panoram Music Machines and to play a song cost twice the going rate you paid to hear it on a 78 from a conventional jukebox. They had a major drawback. Each three minute film clip was on a 16mm reel containing six selections. Your coin played the next film in the sequence. You could not select a specific number. The Soundies Corporation hit a major snag in 1942. Up until that time they had filmed performances using members of the American Federation of Musicians. In June of '42 union head James Caesar Petrillo decreed that no musician members could record. It is well known how the recording industry was affected by the ban. Soundies also suffered and they had to look for ways of keeping the Panoram machines stocked with new titles. In 1937, Mack Sennett's Educational Films company went bust. Once the financial entanglements associated with bankruptcy were sorted, rights to Educational's library of short subjects became available. The Soundies Corporation decided to cash in on the success of the Hope-Crosby *Road* movies. In a Soundie called "Musical Movie Memories" Jimmy Wallington was seen to introduce a selection that twinned Bing's rendition of "I Surrender Dear" from the film short of the same name with a comedy duet by Bob Hope and Leah Ray taken from the Sennett 1934 short *Going Spanish.* Almost all the Soundies were titled after the song they featured. "Musical Movie Memories" was a departure from the norm. Bing's appearance in a Soundie put him in the company of several Crosby inspired vocalists who had performed specifically for the

camera. Buddy Clark and Dick Todd were two such who owed a little to Bing's singing style. And Harry Barris, co-writer of "I Surrender Dear" made six Soundies.

That same Crosby Sennett short sequence popped up on the big screen when the 1946 feature *Road to Hollywood* included "I Surrender Dear" and its parody "Magic C.O.D." That was the year that Bing switched radio sponsor and sure enough "I Surrender Dear" turned up in an early edition of Philco Radio Time. It differed from early radio presentations in that the show's guest, Jimmy Durante, provided the vocal with a little assistance from Bing. The song paid a return visit to the Philco show in 1949 when a few bars of the song were sung by Bing in a sketch about his breaking into showbusiness. Its final radio outing was in January, 1951, when "The Bing Crosby" show was again being presented by Chesterfield Cigarettes.

Bing sings the parody "Magic C. O. D" in the Sennett short *I Surrender Dear*.

In 1954 Bing put together his musical autobiography for Decca Records. For that five LP set Bing's early successes were re-done with Buddy Cole and his Trio. For this latest studio recording Bing referred to the song as a big, big milestone. He undoubtedly regarded it as playing a significant part in his rise to fame. In the last decade of his life he would string together a medley of his hits. There was always a place for "I Surrender Dear". It was always part of the Crosby medleys he performed when he toured during his last years. In addition, his 1970s television shows found him shoehorning it into medleys whenever he was called upon to remind viewers of his major hits. We saw and heard it being performed in 1971 on the Flip Wilson Show. In 1974 Bob Hope joined in when it received an airing on the "Bing Crosby and Friends" show. In the last year of Bing's life he included it in the "A Fiftieth Anniversary Gala" and "Bing in Norway" television shows.

When I had finished the above history of Bing's first million seller (sales unaudited by the record companies but undoubtedly topping a million in its several outings on 78, LP and CD) I needed evidence to prove that "I Surrender Dear" can be truly regarded as a standard. I checked out the versions I had in my own record collection. I decided it qualified as a Great American

Songbook evergreen on the basis that I had versions by a selection of the 20th century's foremost song stylists. The ladies were represented by Rosemary Clooney, Julie London and Lena Horne. The male vocalists comprised Eddie Fisher, Tony Martin, Mel Tormé, Dick Haymes and Gordon MacRae. One version I have which defies easy classification is a recording by Les Paul. He is the world's oldest performing guitarist. His fame as a guitar wizard owes something to the faith and encouragement provided by Bing in the mid-1940s. Recording assignments and a little financial sponsorship of a recording workshop from Bing helped to kick-start the technical and performing career of Les Paul. Just as "I Surrender Dear" did much to kick-start Bing's own career.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

SWEET POTATO PIPER Song. A fun song written by Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco for *Road to Singapore* (1940). Hope and Crosby resort to selling spot remover to natives and Bing sings "Sweet Potato Piper" to draw attention to their product. In case you wondered, an ocarina is referred to as a sweet potato because of its shape.

SWERLING, JO(SEPH) (1893-1964) Screenwriter and playwright. When Bing made his two Major Pictures Productions outside his Paramount contract, Jo Swerling worked on the screenplays of both. He was assisted by William Rankin for *Pennies From Heaven* (1936) and by Richard Connell on *Doctor Rhythm* (1938). Although he had worked on films since *Ladies of Leisure* (1930), Swerling's best work came post-Crosby. Alfred Hitchcock used him for the script of *Lifeboat* (1944) and Frank Capra hired him for *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Outside his work for Hollywood, Swerling co-wrote "Guys and Dolls" for the Broadway stage.

SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT Song. Bing, playing Dan Emmett in *Dixie* (1943), is on a riverboat bound for New Orleans when he sings this traditional spiritual. He had made a studio recording of the song for Decca in 1938.

SWING WITH BING It was Bing's idea to make this golfing short. John Scott Trotter accompanied Bing for the sole musical number in the film: "The Little White Pill on the Little Green Hill". The one-reeler was shot in January, 1940 and distributed by Universal Pictures later that same year.

SWINGING ON A STAR Song. Written by Bing's regular movie songwriters Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen for the film *Going My Way* (1944), it has appeared on just about every "Best of Bing" compilation album since the demise of the 78. To comply with the film's plot requirements, Burke and Van Heusen were asked to provide a song for Bing which would be the equivalent of teaching the Ten Commandments in a rhythmic, amusing manner. "It was a problem," Van Heusen recalled. "We struggled with it for days. In the end it was Bing who supplied the inspiration. We were at his house for dinner and one of the boys was acting up. Bing chastised him by saying, 'What do you want to be - a mule?' That sparked us off." The song's placement in *Going My Way* comes after Rise Stevens, accompanied by the Robert Mitchell Boys' Choir and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, sings "Going My Way" to four music publishers. It is a Father O'Malley (Bing) composition. The publishers don't regard "Going My Way" as having a commercial future. Then they hear "Swinging on a Star" and a deal is done. The music publishers who recognise a hit when they hear one are named Burke, Van Heusen, Dolan (the film's musical director) and Lilley (the film's vocal arranger).

SWINGTIME WITH THE STARS Short film. A one-reeler made to promote the U.S. Coast Guards. Bing sang "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive" and "Don't Fence Me In" with accompaniment by the 11th Naval District Coast Guard Band under the direction of Jimmie Grier. Grier had accompanied Bing on several Brunswick and Decca sides in the early 1930s. The short was included in a video compilation which was made available in 1984. In the short the "Don't Fence Me In" lyrics appeared on the bottom of the screen with a bouncing ball following the words to enable servicemen to compete with Bing on vocals. Porter was a stickler when it came to anyone altering his lyrics but he no doubt tolerated the minor inaccuracies perpetrated by the film's sub-titler in view of the non-commercial nature of the short film.

SWITZER, CARL "ALFALFA" (1927-1959). Child actor, who never managed the transition from a member of the *Our Gang* series to adult roles. By the time Switzer began appearing in Crosby films his peak was passed. He will always be remembered as a key member of the *Our Gang* comedy shorts. He was a member of that kids series from 1935 until 1942 when his freckled face and squeaky off-key voice had a certain charm which would never transfer to adulthood. And so in 1943 he took on a minor role in *Dixie*. The following year he made another brief appearance in a Bing picture when he played Herman Langerhanke in *Going My Way*. By 1951 his role as a messenger in *Here Comes The Groom* was an indicator that he was all but forgotten. He made a comeback of sorts in 1953 when he secured slightly more substantial work on *The High and the Mighty* and *Track of the Cat*. When no offers of further work came his way he supplemented his income as a hunting and fishing guide in northern California. A job

as a bartender followed. Washed up in his early thirties, he was shot at the beginning of 1959 following a drinking brawl over a $50 debt involving his partner from his hunting venture days.

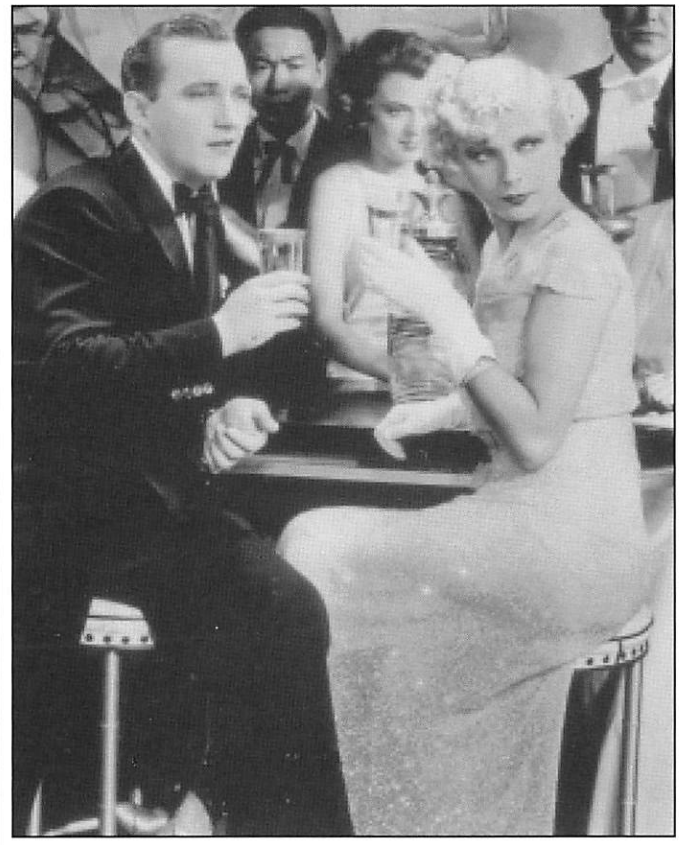
SWOONER CROONER Cartoon. In 1944 Frank Tashlin directed this 7-minute Academy Award nominated animated short. It depicted Bing and Frank Sinatra as roosters and humorously showed how singers could speed up production on the assembly line when American industry was geared up to boost output during wartime.

TAKES TWO TO MAKE A BARGAIN Song. One of five songs written for Bing by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel to feature in *Two for Tonight* (1935), although the film's plot would have us believe that the song was the work of the Crosby character. Bing played a composer in the film. The song was placed at the start of the film when Bing sang it as bailiffs were removing furniture from his domicile.

TAMIROFF, AKIM (1899-1972). Character actor who was often given meaty parts. He was in two Crosby pictures from the 1930s. [Three if you count *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935)] They were *Here is my Heart* (1934) when he played the manager of the upmarket Monte Carlo Hotel and *Paris Honeymoon* (1939) in the more substantial role of the mayor of the mythical town of Pushtalnick. Born in Russia, but of Armenian extraction, Tamiroff's heavy accent was incapable of eradication and he was usually seen playing slightly mysterious foreigners. This did not prevent him from being nominated twice for Oscars as a support player. The films were *The General Died at Dawn* (1936) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943). Unfortunately Tamiroff took on just about every assignment he was offered and towards the end of his life he could be found popping up in obscure European dross.

TASHLIN, FRANK (1913-1972) Director and screenwriter. It took Tashlin fifteen years of toying with Bing's film career before he got serious. Then most people wished he hadn't bothered. In 1944 Tashlin directed the cartoon short *Swooner Crooner*. In 1947 he was one of four writers contributing to the screenplay of the all-star *Variety Girl*. In 1952 he directed and co-wrote the screenplay of the Bob Hope comedy *Son of Paleface*, in which Bing made a gag appearance. Finally he produced and directed *Say One for me* (1959) for Bing's own production company. He had successes as well as failures. If you enjoy rock and roll music you will forgive him his flops because he produced and directed *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956), the best r 'n' r film ever made.

TASHMAN, LILYAN (1899-1934) Actress. She played Bing's fiancée in *Too Much Harmony* (1933). She took the part of a gold-digger and left Bing for Jack Oakie. Tashman had made a successful transition from silents to talkies and was much in demand playing sophisticated or sarcastic blondes. She made just two more films after *Too Much Harmony*, both in 1934. They were *Wine Women and Song* and *Riptide*. She died after an operation to remove a tumour.



Lilyan Tashman shares a drink with Bing in *Too Much Harmony*.

TAUROG, NORMAN (1899-1981) Actor who turned to direction. His acting career began in Hollywood in 1913 and his directorial work in 1928. His work with Bing was as director on *We're not Dressing* (1934), *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935) and *Rhythm on the Range* (1936). Two of those are held in high regard by Bing film watchers. He had received an Academy Award for directing Jackie Cooper in *Skippy* (1931) and was in demand for lightweight comedies. However some of his best work is untypical Taurog. *Boys Town* (1938) and *Young Tom Edison* (1940) showed him capable of tackling drama. Taurog was prolific, which is probably why his films were so variable in quality. He was also seen as easygoing and Paramount made the most of his seemingly pliable nature by letting him work on several Martin and Lewis comedies in the 1950s and nine of Elvis Presley's less memorable efforts in the decade following.

TEAGARDEN, JACK [Weldon Leo Teagarden] (1905-1964). Trombonist, bandleader and vocalist. He was all of those, plus actor in *Birth of the Blues* (1941). As Pepper, he helped Bing fulfil an ambition to form a white jazz band. In the film he played a few jazz

standards such as "Tiger Rag" and "Shine". His distinctive vocals worked well on "The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid" when he joined Bing and Mary Martin. Bing enjoyed working with Jack Teagarden, hence Teagarden's regular guest appearances on Bing's radio shows. Before Teagarden formed his own band in 1939 he'd been in the employ of Ben Pollack and Paul Whiteman. When he "disbanded" in 1946 it was to join Louis Armstrong's All-Stars. His alcoholism did not prevent him from returning to leading his own band in 1951 which he held together for the rest of his life.

Jack Teagarden (centre) with Bing and Rochester in *Birth Of The Blues*.

TEAMWORK Song. Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen wrote this for *The Road to Hong Kong* (1961). The fact that it sounded like typical duet material for a Crosby-Hope routine from a 1940s *Road* picture meant it served its purpose. The film opened with Bing and Bob performing the song on the stage of the London Palladium and more or less closed with Joan Collins joining the two for its reprise.

TEMPTATION Song. Of all the songs featured in *Going Hollywood* (1933) "Temptation" was the one that had a certain future as a standard. In 1976, when M-G-M compiled *That's Entertainment II* following the success of its first musical compilation it was "Temptation" that was used as part of a Crosby sequence. Composers Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown must have been pleased by the number of versions recorded over the years. It cemented Perry Como's claim as a class balladeer in the mid-1940s when it became a massive hit for him and the song was sufficiently robust to withstand a parody by Red Ingle and His Unnatural Seven a couple of years later.

TETZLAFF, TED [Theodore Tetzlaff] (1903-1995) Director of photography who became a fully fledged director. Tetzlaff was still a cameraman when he filmed two consecutive Bing pictures. They were *Rhythm on the River* (1940) and *Road to Zanzibar* (1941). Paramount had used him on its prestigious productions throughout the 1930s and immediately after *Zanzibar* allowed him to test the directorial waters by assigning him to *World Premiere.* Unfortunately before he could get into stride with his new career he was called to serve in the armed forces and had to start again as a cameraman in 1945 before directing *Riffraff* in 1947. Prior to his retirement as a director at the end of the 1950s he made a further dozen pictures, the best remembered being *The Window* (1949).

THANKS Song. Duetted by Bing and Judith Allen in *Too Much Harmony* (1933), Bing regarded "Thanks" as a musical career cornerstone and re-recorded it for his musical autobiography in 1954. Written by Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston it retained its Crosby link into the 1960s when son Phillip recorded it and used Bing to interject a few lines. Dad's involvement might have been to create publicity but the venture would have benefited by being kept secret.

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC Song. Now a Johnny Mercer-Harold Arlen standard but almost a missed opportunity for Bing. It reached the screen in 1942 when it was featured in *Star Spangled Rhythm.* Bing sang "Old Glory" in that all-star film and Johnnie Johnston bagged "That Old Black Magic". Two years later it resurfaced in *Here Comes the WAVES* when Bing sang it in a stage show sequence. But record buyers had to wait a further thirty-two years before Bing made a studio recording of it.

THAT SLY OLD GENTLEMAN Song. Johnny Burke and Jimmy Monaco had to provide a lullaby to fit into the plot of *East Side of Heaven* (1939). "That Sly Old Gentleman" worked well on two counts. Bing used it to sing Baby Sandy to sleep and it provided an appealing Decca side. It was tailor made for Bing's singing style which probably accounts for the fact that I cannot trace any cover versions other than that by Val Doonican on his "Val Sings Bing" album. When *East Side of Heaven* was represented in Bing's musical autobiography "That Sly Old Gentleman" was the song he chose to re-record with Buddy Cole's accompaniment.

THAT'S AN IRISH LULLABY Song. Known to you and I as "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral". It made audiences reach for their handkerchiefs in *Going My Way* (1944) when, to a simple music box accompaniment, Bing sang it and confirmed it was indeed a lullaby as it sent Barry Fitzgerald to sleep. The words and music were by James Royce Shannon. Director Leo McCarey selected the 1913 song for its sentimental qualities. Audiences were eventually able to select from two versions of the song recorded by Bing for Decca. The matrix from the 7th July, 1944 session developed a fault and a new recording had to be made

for subsequent issues. A session on 18th April, 1945 failed to provide an acceptable version but a return visit to Decca's L.A. studio on 17th July resulted in a replacement with an identical arrangement. Amalgamated sales of the two releases earned Bing a gold disc for one million sales.

Keith Parkinson

Where The Blue Of The Night

The well known writer, Mark Steyn published an article about Bing on his web site Steyn Online (www.steynonline.com/content/view/628/28/) on October 15 last year and he has given us permission to reproduce it here. It follows on nicely from Keith Parkinson's *Celluloid Crosby* piece.

Song of the Week #74
by Fred Ahlert, Roy Turk and Bing Crosby

Where The Blue Of The Night
Meets the gold of the day
Someone waits for me...

Thirty years ago - October 14th 1977 - a golden half-century met the blue of the night on a golf course in Madrid: After finishing 18 holes at La Moraleja with three Spanish golf champions, Bing Crosby had a massive heart attack, collapsed, and died. He'd headed to Iberia for a few days of rest and relaxation after some sell-out concerts at the London Palladium, a recording session for BBC radio, a pre-taping of his annual Christmas show, and some tracks for a last album: a typical few days for an "Old Groaner" who was old but assumed he still had plenty of groaning ahead.

At the time of his death, he was the biggest-selling recording star of all time; "White Christmas" was the biggest-selling single of all time, with "Silent Night" not far behind, and a bunch of other hits - including last week's Song of the Week, "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" - way up in the rankings, too. For decades, he was one of the biggest box-office stars in Hollywood, which isn't bad for a fellow for whom the designation "actor" came well after "singer" (and even "businessman"). And, even though acting wasn't really what he did, he did it very well. Watch Bing in almost any nothing scene in any movie - fixing Rosie Clooney a sandwich in *White Christmas*, say: he's always very real, one of the great naturally naturalistic actors of all time. And, if he wasn't doing much acting by the mid-Seventies, the final albums were still pretty good: the baritone was as warm as ever, the phrasing was confident, and songs like "Time On My Hands" and "Yesterday When I Was Young" reveal a Crosby capable of infusing a lyric with real depth. He introduced more hit songs than any other singer and, while a lot of them were passing fancies, a substantial percentage went on to be enduring standards: "Pennies From Heaven", "Moonlight Becomes You", "Swinging On A Star", the last of which Burke and Van Heusen were inspired to write after hearing Bing at a party tell his son to stop being such a mule.

Where did it all go? Wander into a record store now and the biggest-selling record artist has dwindled down to a couple of compilation CDs on weird European labels you've never heard of. To most Americans under a certain age, the name is meaningless except for one song heard for one week every year, underpinning every lite rock, country, oldies or whatever station that switches in mid-December to a seasonal sleighlist of "Holiday Favorites", than which no favorite is more favored than "White Christmas". That's what a half-century golden day shriveled down to in the blue of the night: Bing Crosby, the guy who sings "White Christmas". Does he do anything else?

When a star that bright dims so quickly, it's usually because the keepers of the flame aren't any good at keeping it. A decade or two after the death of a singer or composer or novelist, any diminution in reputation is as much to do with the inept stewardship of his estate by the next of kin and their various advisors as to any judgment by posterity. What Nancy, Frank Jr and Tina have done with the Sinatra catalogue, for example, is in marked contrast to the withering of Bing's legacy. It's not necessary to retell the grim story of Crosby's first family, and his second bunch of kids was barely out of short pants at the time of his death. But his eclipse is sad and unnecessary.

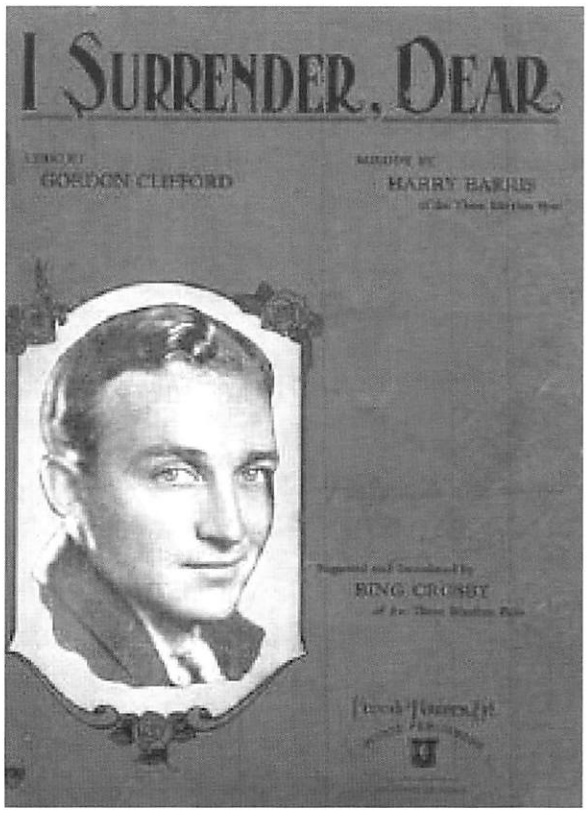
So on this anniversary let's go back before the pipe and cardigan and golf gags and Christmas show banter, to the young Bing of the late Twenties and early Thirties. Artie Shaw described him as "the first hip white person born in the United States". "Ever since Bing first opened his mouth," said Louis Armstrong, "he was the Boss of All Singers" - which is one reason "Mr Satch and Mr Cros" (to quote "Gone Fishin'") made so many records together. And the first time William S Paley of CBS heard Bing open that mouth, it changed the course of his fledgling radio network. Paley was strolling along the deck of a transatlantic liner when he heard a phonograph record - something about somebody surrendering, dear - and he was transfixed. He tracked down the source of the sound and looked at the label on the disc: "I Surrender, Dear. Vocal refrain by Bing Crosby." Then he went straight to the ship's telegraph office and sent a cable to New York: "SIGN UP SINGER NAMED BING CROSBY STOP".

What Paley heard, like everyone else, was the throb in the voice. When Bing started in the Twenties, there were theatre singers - guys like Jolson, aiming at the back of the balcony: they made records but the records were, in essence, a souvenir of a theatrical performance. Then they invented real microphones, and

immediately a new generation of mannered overcompensators showed up, like Whispering Jack Smith and other fellows who, in Will Friedwald's phrase, "overdid the understatement". Crosby was the first truly natural singer of the electronic era - the man who, as Friedwald puts it, "came up with the kind of 'natural' that worked: the warm B-flat baritone with a little hair on it".

Before he was a solo, he was one-third of a trio, and before the trio he was one-half of a double-act. Paul Whiteman hired Bing and Al Rinker as a vocal duo in 1926. They were terrible, and the theatre manager demanded Whiteman fire them. Instead, the bandleader signed a third singer, Harry Barris, and renamed the act the Rhythm Boys. The Rhythm Boys liked to raise a little wilder rhythm out of hours, and, though Whiteman tolerated the booze and the girls and the parties, when Bing got tossed in jail he decided to fire all three of them. The Rhythm Boys were picked up by Gus Arnheim, who quickly figured out that the guy the audience wanted to hear was Bing. Bad news for Al and Harry, but in the latter's case he was also a composer, and one day, hearing Crosby singing variations on Sigmund Romberg's "Lover, Come Back To Me", he was inspired to compose the first ballad purpose-written for Bing:

We've played the game of "stay away"
But it costs more than I can pay
Without you I can't make my way
I Surrender, Dear
I may seem proud, I may act gay
That's just a pose, I'm not that way.
'Cause deep down in my heart I say,
I Surrender, Dear...



Aside from the titter-provoking couplet (at least to contemporary ears) about acting gay but not being that way, "I Surrender, Dear" is a ballad of more or less generic ardor. The lyric is by Gordon Clifford ...and Bing Crosby. Bing has his name on a handful of songs from those early years. Was he just cutting himself in on a piece of the royalty action? Star singers did that a lot back then, and still do. (Two friends of mine, a very eminent songwriting team, were invited to write a song for Celine Dion's last album, but were informed that she'd want a third of the copyright.) But, in this case at least, it seems likely that Bing actually tossed in a few lyric contributions for his buddy Barris. The Rhythm Boys had a lot of fun with jazzy novelties like "Happy Feet" and (another Barris number) "Mississippi Mud", but "I Surrender, Dear" killed the act stone dead: Audiences wanted to hear, as Crosby biographer Gary Giddins put it, "that astonishing singer with the throb in his voice, not a trio of hepcats".

Harry Barris might reasonably have expected to get at least a couple of songwriting gigs out of the new solo act - or maybe something even more lucrative. After all, for his new CBS radio show, Bing would need, like everybody else, a theme song. Surely "I Surrender, Dear" was the obvious choice. But Crosby wasn't convinced that surrendering to someone was quite the right message for a radio theme, and started casting around for alternatives. It came down to a choice between "Love Came Into My Heart" by Burton Lane (composer of Song of the Week #54 "How About You?") and Harold Adamson (lyricist of Song of the Week #34 "Time On My Hands"), and an alternative ballad by Fred Ahlert and Roy Turk. With music by Lou Handman, Turk had had a big hit in 1926 with "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" and (posthumously) an even bigger hit four decades later when Elvis revived it. But in 1927 the lyricist teamed up with Fred Ahlert and had a great run of songs that are still high earners today - "I'll Get By", "Mean To Me", "Walkin' My Baby Back Home", "I Don't Know Why (I Love You Like I Do)". "Mean To Me (Why must you be mean to me?)" ends with an ingenious kind of O Henry twist on the title: "Can't you see what you mean to me?" But, for the most part, Turk & Ahlert songs are as natural as walking. They have something that's very hard to fake: a sense of inevitability about them. In 1931, though, it took them a couple of goes to get it right:

When the gold of the day
Meets the blue of the night...

Well, you can see what they're getting at: The order has a kind of logic to it. But it just doesn't sing as well. So Roy Turk re-jigged it:

When the blue of the night
Meets the gold of the day...

Almost there. Turk made one further change: not "*when* the blue", but "*where*", which makes what had sounded previously like an eagerly awaited date into something

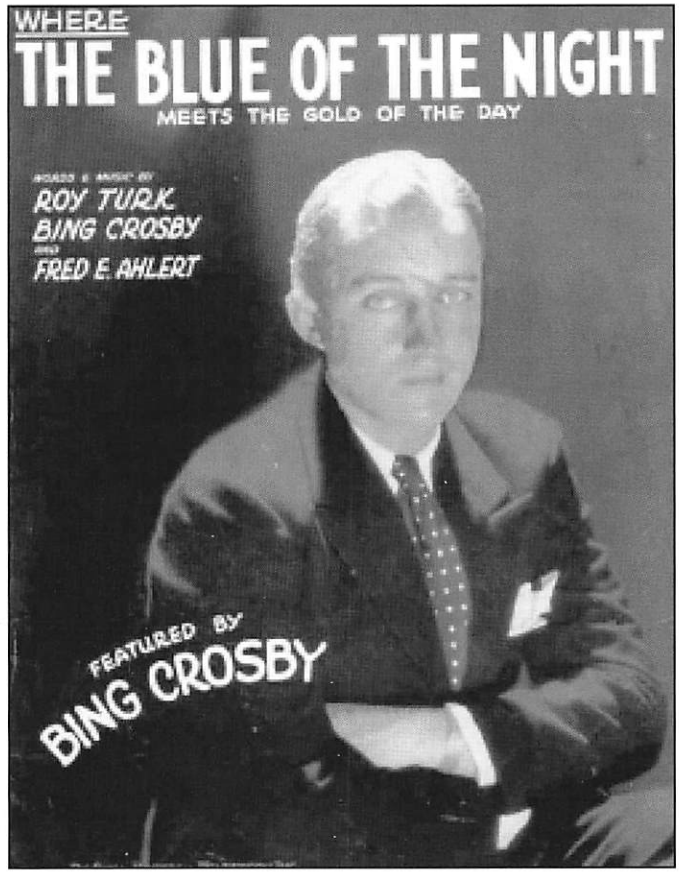
more mysterious. Ahlert's tune is a simple waltz, but it works in four/four, as a shamrock-hued ballad, or just as a series of pleasing monosyllables to show off the richness of Crosby's baritone:

Where The Blue Of The Night
Meets the gold of the day
Someone waits for me
And the gold of her hair
Crowns the blue of her eyes
Like a halo tenderly
If only I could see her
Oh, how happy I would be...

Aside from singing it on the radio every week for years, he recorded it anew once every decade or so, but that very first disc - from November 1931, with Eddie Lang's marvelously cool guitar - is hard to beat. It's the perfect intro theme: It's anticipatory, particularly once Turk switched round the "gold of the day" and the "blue of the night". For when the blue surrenders to the first golden shaft, it's dawn, a new day, and a world of possibilities. Yet that original recording has one blemish: a verse. Bing sings:

Why do I live in dreams
Of the days I used to know?
Why can't I find
Real peace of mind
And return to the long ago?

He's explaining the song before he sings it, and in doing so makes it more ordinary. But you can't blame him. He is, after all, a co-writer of the song. And which bit of it did he co-write? The verse. So, on that first recording, he was in effect justifying his cut of the royalties. By the time he re-recorded it as part of a "musical autobiography" for Decca in the Fifties, he stuck with the chorus and credited it only to "Turk & Ahlert". It was hard on Harry Barris. His daughter Marti said it "broke his heart" when Bing didn't choose "I Surrender, Dear", but it was surely the right choice. America was surrendering to Crosby, not the other way round. Yet being Bing's theme wasn't an unmixed blessing for "Blue Of The Night". Yes, you get sung every week, decade in, decade out: you're earning money - but you're not being heard as a song. You're a cue, a walk-on, an intro. "Thanks For The Memory", a superb song, is under-recorded because it was Bob Hope's personal national anthem for almost 70 years. Likewise, I couldn't recall the last time I'd heard "Where The Blue Of The Night (Meets The Gold Of The Day)" in a non-Bing context until a few weeks ago, when the mail brought a copy of John Prine and Mac Wiseman's lovely new album *Standard Songs For Average People*. Prine and Wiseman aren't exactly average - the latter's a bluegrass pioneer, the former a country-folkie once tipped as the new Dylan. And the "standard songs" aren't that standard, either, but an odd mix of Patti Page, Ernest Tubb, Kris Kristofferson and the Baptist hymnal. But their pared-down countryfied "Blue Of The Night" is very affecting. Wiseman is old enough to remember hearing it as a child when his mom tuned in the Crosby show every week, but his version's more than just an affectionate tribute: It reminds you of how pleasing the song is in its own right. As for the new Dylan, well, the old Dylan liked "Blue Of The Night" enough to borrow its chords and structure for a song called "When The Deal Goes Down".



"I really think," said Bing in old age, "I'd trade anything I've ever done if I could have written just one hit song." He tried, occasionally. Almost to the end, he enjoyed writing parodies. And he'd occasionally take an idea to an old pal like Johnny Burke ("Imagination", "The Road To Morocco") in hopes of getting some help working it up. But the one enduring "hit song" with Crosby's name on it was written in 1932 with Victor Young and Ned Washington. Young composed "Around The World" and Washington's lyrics include "The Nearness Of You", so who knows why they needed Bing to chip in? But it's a shimmering ethereal ballad:

I need your love so badly
I love you oh, so madly
But I don't stand A Ghost Of A Chance with you...

What a fantastic opening line that melody has: ten Gs all in a row - I-need-your-love-so-bad-ly-I-love-you - until it goes up to B flat on that great aching "oh". And yet when you hear it sung it never sounds like a one-finger tune, only the most perfect fusion of words and music. And what a great idea for a song: You don't stand not just a chance but the mere ghost thereof. You don't have even the "frail hope of a frail hope, the revenant of a revenant", as Joel Faflak put it, comparing it to

"Adonais", Shelley's elegy on the death on Keats. If you doubt how many great songs Crosby popularized, consider this: Sinatra recorded over 100 numbers previously sung by Bing. But he only recorded one tune co-written by Bing, and he liked it so much he did it twice, first in 1945, then again in 1959. The later recording is the ghostliest "Ghost Of A Chance" you'll ever hear with a Gordon Jenkins arrangement that actually turns the cliché of a "haunting melody" into reality. I always like it when they get to this section:

But what's the good of scheming?
I know I must be dreaming
'Cause I don't stand A Ghost Of A Chance with you...

Gordon Jenkins has the band take the words right out of Sinatra's mouth, letting the strings "sing" "I know I must", after which Frank returns with a very dreamy "I'm dreaming". It's a peerless Sinatra transformation of a great Crosby song. If you want an equivalent in Bing's oeuvre, I once spoke to Ken Barnes, his last record producer, about his and Pete Moore's posthumous (1980s) orchestration of a Crosby/Clooney vocal track from the Fifties of "Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland", also very other worldly.

Still, on this 30th anniversary of his death, I'd be happier if Bing was a bit less other worldly and back instead in this one. But, if his own albums are going to languish out-of-print or unpromoted, we might as well appreciate his occasional songwriting contributions - one-third of one solid standard, and one-third of a song that deserves to be more than just an old radio theme:

Where The Blue Of The Night
Meets the gold of the day
Someone waits for me

- and a fine song waits to be rediscovered.

Mark Steyn

(reprinted from SteynOnline.com © Mark Steyn, 2007)

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Norman Wolfe, by email from Cumming, Georgia, USA

I am enjoying the latest edition. My comments for posterity - liked both covers. It must be quite a quarterly challenge for you. I always open the envelope in mortal fear of seeing you on the cover, in a trilby and smoking a pipe! Delighted you are resisting what must be an enormous temptation.

Mary Crosby is right about the damage one angry man can do. It frustrates me thinking how different it would have been without Gary. Mary and Howard are saying about the same thing. It's sadly true about Hollywood kids. No chance, whatever.

I agree with you about the sides with Heifetz. How I wish they had done them 10 years earlier. Can you imagine how they would have sounded around the time he did the Victor Herbert stuff which is flat out superb?

Miscellaneous thoughts. Cute picture of Maureen Solomon's face superimposed between the singer and Sinatra - charming article on the Yorkshire visits - great pix of Bailey's Music Shop - I had no idea what it looked like - Keith Parkinson's letter about re-hashing Crosbyana makes a good point. He's right.

Ken Barnes recollections of his inter-action with Crosby are warm and interesting. Martin McQuade is giving you excellent stuff and illustrates what Parkinson means. Prof. Basinger wrote a book on silent stars which I drew on for my Mary Pickford book. I am surprised she did not conclude that Bob Hope secretly resented Crosby as I think he did. Love there, certainly, but envy as well. Her description of Crosby is fascinating. Never heard it put quite that way. Meanness? Well, well.

I never intend these ramblings for publication although you seem able to transform them into civilized communiqués which keep me from alienating half the membership. I do them because good editors—and you are indeed that—should have some feedback. They always want it and get too little of it.

Graham Pascoe, NSW, Australia.

I've just finished reading the Spring BING and it's one of the best. Congratulations to all concerned and especially to Michael Crampton for his fifty years of ICC membership. We're fortunate to have such dedicated people who help us to enjoy and expand our interest in Bing Crosby.

Good to learn that the finances are in good shape and that Gary Giddins is continuing his work towards volume 2 of the biography. Mark Scrimger's article on Bailey's Music Shop and the photos were fascinating; how different from today's self-service 'record shops'.

Keith Parkinson's contributions are always informative. In Australia *Mississippi* was first screened in August 1935 in Sydney at the Prince Edward, known as 'the theatre beautiful'. Unlike its introduction at the Paramount in Manchester, it was the feature rather than the support, the supporting film in Sydney being *Private Worlds* starring Claudette Colbert. Sydneysiders were able to see it again in the 1940s and in 1953 it was revived as a support of *The Savage* starring Charlton Heston.

Thanks to Bob Achorn for his notes on *Sing You Sinners*. Unlike most of Bing's films, it was shown first

in Melbourne. Later in the same month (October 1938) it opened in Sydney and in the previous month *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper ran a story claiming that Paramount officials had wanted to change the title but Bing objected and 'wired every big dance band in the country to play one of the songs from the film and to announce that it was from "Sing You Sinners" ... and officials did not dare change the name'. (Did the newspaper really think its readers would believe the tale?)

An Aussie slant on **Jocks, Jukes and Discs** may interest readers of BING. In 1946 and 1947 some record reviewers in Australia were complaining that Bing sounded 'tired' on some discs. His July 1946 recordings of' 'Lullaby' and 'Where My Caravan Has Rested' were not released as singles in Australia. 'Pretending' from May 1946 was planned for a Decca disc in July 1947 but, for some reason, the release was cancelled. Instead it came here in 1948 with 'Prove It By The Things You Do'. It lasted in the Decca catalogue until 1952 but its total sales of 4417 were the lowest of Bing's twenty Decca 1948 releases. 'Gotta Get Me Somebody To Love' was not released as a single in Australia.

The Australian release of Mariah Carey's latest disc was given a big plug on Aussie TV with the claim that she now had surpassed the record number of number one chart hits in USA previously held by the Beatles and Elvis Presley. No mention of Bing, of course.

Pete Cakanic, Augusta, Georgia, USA

I really like latest BING. Great cover. I think Bing the Sportsman would make a good book. His horses weren't nags. He became an adept horse trader, Golf, baseball, fishing and hunting were all areas in which he was proficient or even expert.

Greg Van Beek's review of Bing's private recordings was well researched. And as I'm sure you know, Bing made more recordings for the military than anyone.

I like Mary's answer to the tabloid hack who ignored her answers. When I read the first part it occurred to me how could Mary be talking about something she did not witness. Her letter explained it. While the tabloid Globe article text is weak, the picture of Mary was interesting. *(Editor: The following were not letters addressed to BING magazine but do complement some of the views being expressed.)*

Jane Stoutenborough, as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

I was moved by Mary Crosby's letter published in Bing this month. Having read the accompanying article, I thought the article was okay, but it was clear it was not what Mary had in mind when she agreed to be interviewed. She wanted to talk about her father's accomplishments, not about Gary Crosby and Bing as a father.

And I think taking the time to write a letter to us, demonstrates the family's commitment and involvement and how this family of Bing and Kathryn was raised. Having said this all before, I am reminded that the children were not only young at the time of their father's death, but had been raised by Bing and Kathryn to lead private lives. Bing was a private person. The family grieved privately. Now Mary and her husband Mark are on tract and that can only mean good things to come for the rest of us. Thanks, Mary.

Sally Monaghan, South Orange, New Jersey, as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

I agree. I thought the letter was excellent. First, we have to remember by the time Bing had this second family he was semi-retired. They didn't really know him as the legend, but as their father and husband. Also, I'm sure it is frustrating to them that whenever they talk about Bing's accomplishments, the conversation is always returned to the topic of his first family. I don't think I've ever read or seen an interview with Kathryn, before or after Bing's death, in which she wasn't asked about his troubled first family. I think it's understandable that as a family, they "circled the wagons," as Mary said. However, as a long-time fan of Bing, it saddens me that he is so overlooked by the public. I'm glad that the family has decided to take a pro-active approach in promoting him.

Stan White, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, UK

Bing Crosby – Through The Years Vol. 1 Sepia 1111 is a worthy successor to the John McNicholas Jonzo series. It is good to see a number of names involved with the original Chronological series still involved and the colour CD graphics will hopefully help the sales commercially.

Malcolm has done a good job in maintaining the quality of the notes and recording information. His note for "You Gotta Show Me" is interesting in its mention of a brassy opening which rather jars because that more or less describes why Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey fell out musically – that opening would not have suited Jimmy! Decca did not quite get the correct balance, which could have been difficult with the recording technique then employed, if Bing was near to the band. Mind you, it would have been possible to ask Robin Cherry to bring the brassy opening in at a slightly lower level and to then restore it to the correct level (as recorded) as Bing came in. As Buddy Cole once said to me, there are all sorts of tricks you can do to improve recordings.
(Editor: There were comments on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum too and I hope the contributors won't mind if I quote them.)

Steven Lewis, Kansas City, USA

The first Sepia edition of the Chronological Bing Crosby appears to match the quality of the Jonzos, and the price drop via the International Club Crosby —

$12.50 and that includes shipping—can't be beat, especially because we are getting many songs that have never been on CD and no retakes. No doubt there were retakes, but I guess they have been lost or remain somewhere in the Decca vaults of Universal Music Group. I guess if you want alternate takes from this era you will have to defer to Bing's radio show.

It appears Malcolm was the author of the bit of understatement of Bing's 1950 success. Only a knowledgeable Crosby fan could consider 11 hit records and a third finish at the box office to be a "reasonably successful year"!

Thanks to Geoff Milne for providing the source recordings and Wig for giving up his retirement to distribute them in the United States.

John Richard Baker, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, UK

I too received my copy of "Through the Years" Vol 1 today via the ICC. It was fully up to expectations. The booklet format follows the same general style as that set by John McNicholas, with a narrative about each track (now by Malcolm Macfarlane), followed by listings of date, Master numbers and accompanists.

There are four photos in colour. The sound quality, as might be expected is superb. Congratulations to all on the birth of a bonny sibling to the Chronological series. Malcolm's comments are perhaps a little less critical and analytical than those of John.

In my view, anybody who can afford them, and has not yet bought the Chronological series, is not a true fan, and should get them now (if still available), and should certainly now get "Through the Years".

BUY NOW BUY NOW BUY NOW BUY NOW BUY NOW BUY NOW - or hang your heads in shame!

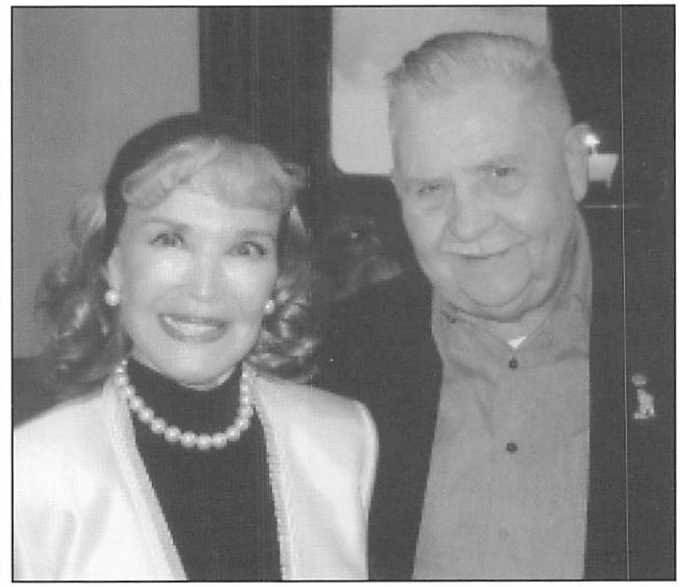
Alan Matheson, by email

This is overdue, I know, but thanks for printing my letter regarding John Scott Trotter in the last issue of BING - even if I'm listed as "Ian". In any case that was a great issue and I enjoyed all the material on there. As well, I just received and finished listening to the new Sepia Bing CD that continues the Jonzo series. The remastering is excellent as were the liner notes. I'm very glad that you and Sepia (and all those connected) are continuing this project. There's not a substitute, in my mind, for having the opportunity to sample a major performer's career in this way and that includes all the great, good and lesser recordings (and the alternate takes-where possible) that Bing made. . . For me, any period of Bing's work is of interest, and because he was such an adaptable "listening" musician, he can surprise you. A case in point being the near-operatic tone on display on "Milady". He sounds more at home on this than Dorothy Kirsten!

Henry Sipila, Rocky Point, New York, USA

...I am still trying to get Bing's name in the local papers. I am enclosing my 55th wedding anniversary notice from *Newsday*, the largest paper on Long Island and they mentioned that I was "a member of the International Club Crosby, a club dedicated to the career of Bing Crosby."

I met Kathryn Crosby twice at Stony Brook, Long Island and at Hofstra last year. She's always very gracious.



Henry with Kathryn Crosby at Hofstra in October 2006.

John Benstead, London SE16, UK

The National Film Theatre (under Waterloo Bridge) is screening *High Society* on 3 separate days in May. It's part of a Sinatra season of films. Maybe one day they might do a Bing season, fingers crossed.

(Editor: The BFI issued a sheet about the film to the audience and this included the following extract from Michael Freedland's book about Frank Sinatra.

What really attracted Sinatra to the movie was the opportunity to work with his idol, Crosby. Saul Chaplin, who with Johnny Green was the musical director and shared an Oscar nomination for the movie, told me: 'Sol Siegel, the producer, already had Crosby and Kelly and it happened at a moment when Frank was free. He wanted to do the picture and we all wanted him too.'

Once more, there were the difficulties over rehearsals. As Chaplin told me: 'Bing would always come on time and do his rehearsing and Frank would every now and again show up late.' But a formula was devised. 'I'd continue with the rehearsal with Bing,' said Chaplin, 'and when it came to Frank's turn, he'd say, 'Come into the next room and show me what my part is.' Frank either did not know his lines or was showing a kind of humility in the face of his idol.

The truth of the matter was that Crosby was a conscience point for him. 'It was the first time he felt self-conscious. He was embarrassed about not doing things right - in front of Bing.' It seemed to be a recipe

for lost illusions, if not disaster, but it didn't work out that way. 'They adored each other,' said Chaplin.

Bing and Frank rehearse the "Well Did You Evah? number

. . . Better still was the duet with Crosby, 'Well DidYa Evah?' Chaplin was looking for a number for a duet and found this song, which the studio already owned, in the MGM archives. The lyrics were largely changed by Chaplin himself, a brave thing to do with lines written by Cole Porter, but then those originally topical lyrics were written for the 1938 show *Dubarry Was a Lady* and were hardly suitable for the post-war world of the 1950s.

Its best (new) line is the one in which Sinatra sings in an aside to Bing, 'Don't dig that kinda croonin' chum' to which the older man replies, 'You must be one of the newer fellers'. Crosby came up with that line in rehearsal. They liked it so much that it was written down and then recorded. So was another response: 'Sauced again!'

(Taken from Michael Freedland's book *All The Way: A Biography of Frank Sinatra*, published in 1997)

Anne Shelton remembers Bing Crosby

Dennis Marshall of Surrey in Canada drew our attention to a copy of a letter written by Anne Shelton that accompanied the CD "Thank You Captain Miller". The CD was released by Kelly Richards, Anne Shelton's niece, who also wrote Anne's biography. This is what Anne had to say.

What can I say about Bing Crosby that has not been said already? He had great talent, he was kind, and so sweet to a 16 year old girl in 1944, that was me Anne Shelton.

How we met. I must take you back to 1944. I was broadcasting my own show called "Anne to You" the show was live. About half an hour before I went on air, I received a phone call asking me to come to the Queensbury Club (The London Casino) as Bing Crosby was there, and he wanted to sing with me. I thought it was a joke, and said "Sorry. I can not come, as I am having tea with the King." About ten minutes later Cecil Madden the head of Overseas Broadcasting phoned me and said "Anne. Bing is here and he wants you to be in his show for the boys and girls, so, after you have finished your broadcast please come straight here."

My sister Eileen was with me, and she said it can't be a joke, we had better go along. So I phoned my mummy and told her not to send the car to the studio, but to send it to the Queensbury Club, as I was going to sing with Bing Crosby, she was just as excited as I was, but not as nervous.

After the broadcast my sister and I got a taxi to the Queensbury Club. When we went to the stage door, and down to the stage the back stage seemed empty. I turned to my sister and said "I told you it was a joke" Then I was met by an American officer. He said "are you Anne Shelton? I have been looking for you." He took me to a dressing room, and there he was, the man himself, he said "Hi Anne Gal. I am glad you came to sing with me." For me this was a dream. He put his arm around me and said "You O.K.?" I told him that I thought I was going to faint. He said "with that wonderful smile? Come on you are the greatest." To me that was just like getting an Oscar.

We did the show, the rest is history. Our friendship lasted until he went to the Great Showman in the Sky and I am sure God will give Bing his own show, not just because of his talent, but because of all the good things he did in his life on earth. You see Bing was not a phoney. He said what he meant, and meant what he said.

I have a wonderful photograph of him in his golf hat signed "To my dear friend Anne", and to be called a dear friend by Bing really means something. If anyone asked me what I thought of Bing Crosby I would just say 'The Best'.

Anne Shelton

Watching the old tapes brings back pleasant memories

Kevin Wright of the Canton Illinois, Daily Ledger mentioned Bing in his column on February 23.

In the song, "Oh Mr. Crosby", "Yes Mr. Harris". "I noticed your game bag was a little empty today." These were the immortal words of Bing Crosby and Phil Harris as they had a drink after filming an episode for the great Curt Gowdy series "American Sportsman." The famous

pair were in Iowa filming a pheasant hunt. I really don't remember the date but I would expect it was in the early to mid-70's.

Another episode found the pair bird hunting in Africa. "Good shot Mr. C." "Thank you dad" was the response of Mr. Crosby.

I was fortunate enough to have purchased a few VHS tapes of the old series. This particular video was all bird hunting. Included in as well was a goose hunting trip with Sam Snead and Andy Griffith, both so young looking at the time. Hank Aaron and Curt Gowdy were duck hunting in California and another segment was Gowdy quail hunting with the legendary coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.

These shows appeared just as they were shot then with no digital enhancement in any way. So by today's standards you would consider them not so well done. But in that time they were truly the best and even today I would rank these shows high above anything that is done. I still get chills when I hear the opening music to the show.

Is there any way we could go back and bring those times back again? Can we make shows of that quality but keep them as if they were made in the 70's?

I also have a fishing series that has a segment with then-President Jimmy Carter. Gowdy had taken President Carter and his wife salmon fishing. President Carter showed that he was very good with a fly rod. And his wife was as well, as she landed a monster salmon.

I guess now when I start feeling my age, I pop one of the videos in the machine and go back 30 years. I am just a kid again. No bills, no worries, nothing. I am just a fishermen and a dreamer. Can life get any better than that?

Kevin Wright

That Was The Year That Was!

Ron Field remembers a certain year with great affection.

The year 1957 was quite a year in my life.

Having left Australia 12th July and arriving in Vancouver, Canada on Monday 29th July, I decided to take a Greyhound bus journey.

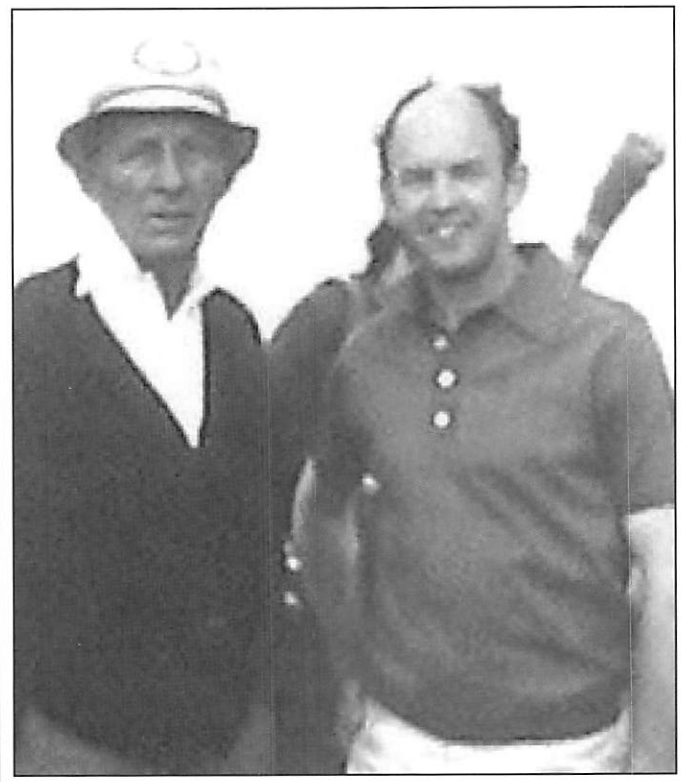
I left Vancouver on Thursday 1st August.

In the paper on Friday morning 2nd August I saw a photo of Bing in the paper. I found out where he was staying and left a note for him.

As providence had it, I happened upon Bing going into a restaurant with Phil Harris and two lovelies. Bing was the Guest of Honour for the Seattle Seafarers Carnival and given the keys to the city. I waited near the restaurant and finally Bing and company came out. It was a 'now or never' situation to go say hello.

On introducing myself to him, Bing said that he had received my note and we talked for a few minutes. He asked if I was going to Los Angeles and when I said 'yes', he said to go see his brother.

Saturday 3rd. I was walking along the street and there was Bing standing in a doorway so I got to say hello again. I took some photos – well slides really on a Mamiya 120 film camera, using roll film. I took several but when the slide was finally developed, all the shots were on the one frame and Bing had a cigarette coming out of his ear, his nose etc. That was disappointing as Bing looked straight at the camera for me. We laughed about this when I walked Turnberry with him on 4th. July 1975.



Ron with Bing at Turnberry in 1975.

Venturing further south I eventually arrived in Los Angeles. On reflection I think it would have been Sunday 18th. August that I went to a TV studio for a fund raising show and the MC was no other than Bob Crosby. I had my photo taken with Bob, but he had his head down and not looking at the camera. By this stage I had bought an 8mm movie camera and was able to get shots of him and his wife and children and also Carole Richards.

Monday 19th August I found my way out to the Crosby Building on Sunset Boulevard. Going up the stairs to the first floor, there was a man in a chocolate coloured 'slack suit' (same colour shirt and pants) stretched out on the lounge. The switchboard girl asked if she could help and I told her I wished to see Mr. Larry Crosby as his brother Bing told me to look him up. Well, the man on the lounge was Larry and we went into his office. We talked and he had a shillelagh hanging on the door. He asked if he could do anything for me. I asked about a studio tour, but Bing wasn't contracted then, so that wasn't possible. He offered me tickets to Disneyland, but I declined as I didn't want to be seen as a bit of a bludger (sponger).

And, it was because of Bing that I met my present

wife, Anita. I got off the Greyhound Bus in Tacoma to take a photo of the street and when I got back in the depot my bus had gone. I caught up with it in Olympia and Anita was sitting in the seat I had been occupying.

After regaining my seat on the Greyhound bus from Anita, I continued to Kelso where I stayed for a few days. Then it was to Eugene, Oregon for a couple of days with a bloke from Australia. I had been engaged to his sister. Anyway his name is Jim Bailey and he was at the University of Oregon on an athletic scholarship. Jim was the first man to break the 4 minute mile in the U.S. in May 1956 and represented Australia at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

From there it was to San Francisco where I looked up people I'd met in Honolulu on my way over. I also met Priscilla Koernig who was involved with the Club Crosby. I was a member of the Southern Cross Branch in Australia/New Zealand. Priscilla showed me around to a few places in 'Frisco. I never saw her again until 2003 at Gonzaga.

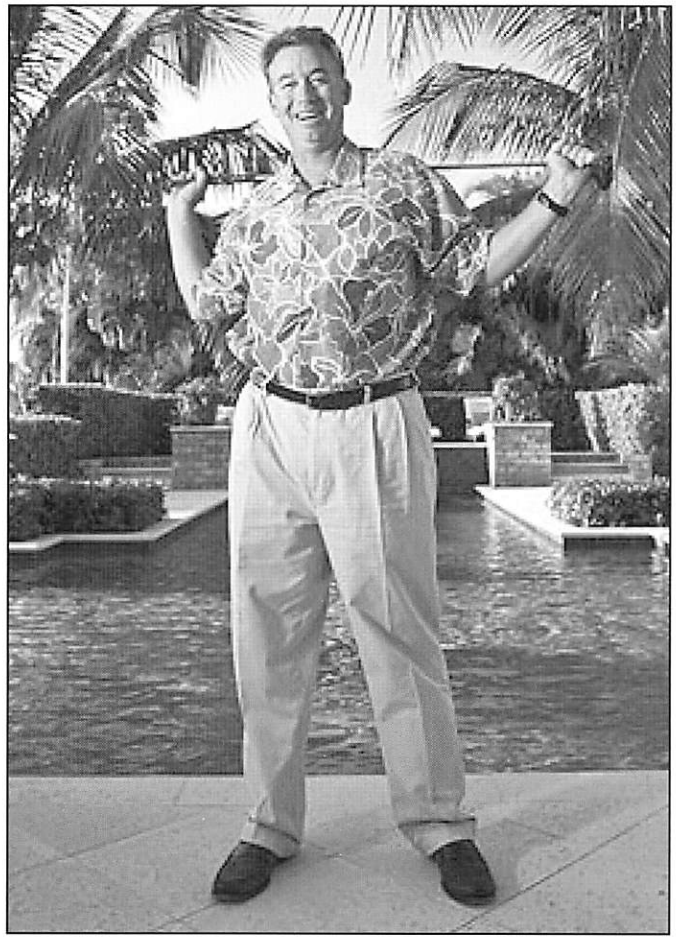
Just a bit of history.

Ron Field

Why Nathaniel Crosby holds a special place in the game

Michael Bamberger, Senior Writer with Sports Illustrated had this article on www.golf.com on June 9 which we have had to edit it down in places to fit it in. Go to:
http://www.golf.com/golf/tours_news/article/0,28136,1812977,00.html for the full article.

As his father had a gift for singing, Nathaniel Crosby has a gift for talking. When the younger Crosby won the 1981 U.S. Amateur at the Olympic Club in San Francisco, four years after Bing's death on a Madrid golf course, Dave Marr of ABC did an interview with the then 19-year-old Crosby that went on forever, even though Marr's questions were short and to the point. Nathaniel has a black-and-white picture from the '75 Junior World Golf Championship — played annually at Torrey Pines, site of this week's U.S. Open, and other San Diego courses — that shows him from the back and Bing from the front, but even from behind you can tell that the kid's doing the talking. Nathaniel's wife, Sheila, has been known to say, "He can talk, can't he?" Jackie Burke, the former Masters winner and Crosby's godfather, signed a book for Nathaniel with these words: "Your father left me with a hell of a job." As they are both plus-4 talkers, you can imagine their practice-tee sessions. In an act of self-protection, Crosby doesn't pick up ringing landline phones in his high-ceilinged house at Lost Tree, the South Florida development where Jack Nicklaus also lives. A bad day for him would be one in which he lost his iPhone charger.



Nathaniel at his Florida home.

Some of Nathaniel's language is straight out of Bing's performing heyday. (Bing's competitive golf highlight came in 1950, when he played in the British Amateur on the Old Course, losing in the first round to a St. Andrews carpenter as 20,000 people followed them.) In conversation Nathaniel will refer to boldface names from yesteryear (Jimmy Durante would be a prime example) as "hot dogs." Find another 46-year-old anywhere who uses *hot dog* that way. If Crosby wants to tell you something off the record, he'll say, "I wouldn't want to say this out loud." For *angry*, he'll use *cross*. When was the last time you heard that? He refers to the yips, which infect his chipping, as "the virus." When a comedian — a Jackie Gleason, a Phil Harris, Bob Hope off camera, Jack Benny never — worked blue, Bing would say he "got so trash can," and Nathaniel uses that phrase today.

Even when he's not using phrases from the golden age of radio, Nathaniel Crosby's speech is out of a time warp: American college life, circa 1982. If Crosby says, of no one in particular, "She lost her amateur status," it may have nothing to do with a female golfer cashing a tournament check. Regarding his own effort to become a reinstated amateur — he played three years of professional golf after graduating from the University of Miami in 1984 — Crosby says it was easy: "I hit a bucket of balls for a USGA guy, and he says, 'You're right. You're no pro.'" It's a line he's been using for

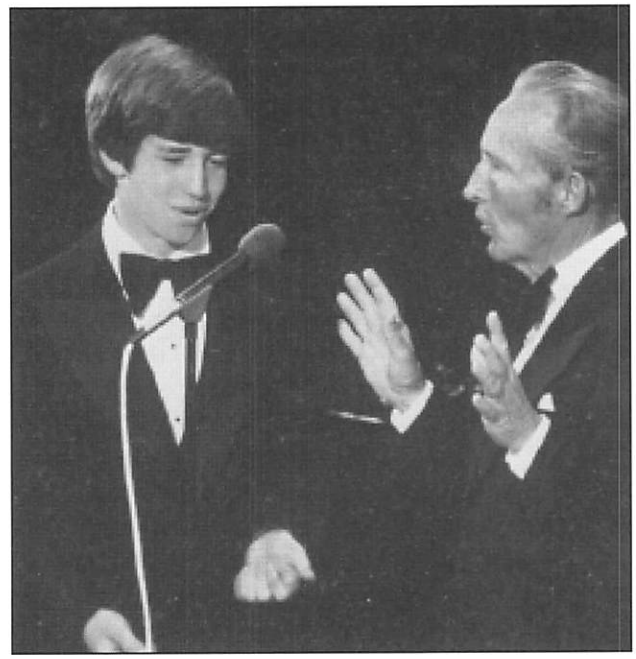
years, but he tells it fresh, and he tells it clean. Bing's son does not work trash can.

. . . Soon after becoming the president of Toney Penna Golf, Nathaniel went to Asia for 11 days with Bob Hope. By day on this road show, Hope and Crosby would play golf and meet with highly placed government finance and trade ministers — too highly placed to be useful to Crosby — and the occasional golf distributor. At night Hope would perform, working Crosby into his show and teaching him how to deliver a line. Of the legendary friendship between Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, Nathaniel says there was no rivalry, even after each had a California pro-am tournament bearing his name. "They wished each other the best every day of their lives," Crosby says. Hope paid Nathaniel $10,000 to accompany him on that 1989 trip. Why? "Because Bob Hope was a very kind man and a great friend of my father's," Crosby says. "And because he had never spent much time with me." When Crosby won the Amateur, Hope, watching on a pro-shop TV in Minneapolis, cried like a baby, according to an assistant pro in the shop that day.

Crosby was introduced to golf by his father, who made 13 holes in one in his life, a comment on both the crooner's skill and how much he played. For years Bing and Nathaniel, the last of his seven children (four from his first marriage, three from his second), played golf five times a week when Bing wasn't on the road. Bing's main swing thought for Nathaniel was "use more club." When Nathaniel, at 15, won the club championship against the menfolk at Burlingame Country Club in suburban San Francisco, where they lived, Bing went home to his wife, Kathryn, and said, "Today is the happiest day of my life." Your guess to her response is likely correct.

Despite Bing's role, Nathaniel learned the basics of the game from an improbable source. "We lived on a five-acre parcel where I'd hit plastic balls with our Irish nanny, Bridget, who was a lefty and a pro, and it was Bridget who taught me the grip," Crosby says. "She died when I was 11. My daughter Bridget is named for her." Nathaniel and Sheila have six children in their house off Jack Nicklaus Drive, four from Nathaniel's first marriage, two from hers, all between 12 and 17. On weekends the kids often bring friends to the house in North Palm Beach. Yes, it's bedlam.

. . . Of a half-dozen people asked recently about Crosby's USGA feats, it was a novelist — and how fitting is that? — who came closest to taking the lid off the subject. J. Michael Veron is a writer of golf fiction, a Louisiana lawyer, a scratch player, a USGA committee member and a friend of Crosby's. Speaking of those two weeks in Crosby's golfing life, Veron says, "I don't know what tune Bing was humming in Nathaniel's ear, but the beat must have been perfect."



Nathaniel with his father at the Palladium in 1976.

For Nathaniel, it's easier to turn those two events into a line, one he delivers well. (Bob Hope would be pleased.) Crosby says, "My father sang *White Christmas*. My sister shot J.R. I had to do something to make a name for myself." Nathaniel's sister, Mary Crosby, played J.R.'s mistress on the TV series *Dallas*, about an obnoxious Texas oil family, and is the answer to the ubiquitous 1980 question, "Who Shot J.R.?"

Somebody, upon learning that Nathaniel's father was Bing, once said to Nathaniel, "That's as famous as famous gets." Some of that fame landed in Nathaniel's lap. He's the skinny kid in the V-neck sweater, with the plastered hair and the braces, in some of the Bing Crosby Christmas specials. (He appeared in 11 of them.) Tens of millions of people watched those shows, when TV was dominated by three networks and boredom was a way of life. There was a vast built-in audience for any news about Nathaniel Crosby, and then he went out and won a national golf title. No modern winner of the U.S. Amateur ever got more attention in victory, except maybe Tiger Woods, and then only when he won it for a second time (and then a third).

Bing Crosby is one of the patron saints of the USGA. He and Hope won the Bob Jones Award, the USGA's highest honor, in 1970, and the USGA museum has had exhibits honoring Crosby for, among other things, inventing the celebrity pro-am and making so many aces. (He made one on the famous over-the-cove 16th at Cypress Point with, Nathaniel noted recently, a 48-inch driver. His swing was dripping syrup.) Crosby organized the first celebrity pro-am in 1937, at the Rancho Santa Fe golf course, near San Diego. (Today, there's a course in Rancho Santa Fe, designed by Fred Couples and Brian Curley, called Crosby National.) David Fay, the USGA executive director, believes that Dwight Eisenhower and Arnold Palmer actually

continued the movement that Crosby and Hope began: spreading the gospel of golf to America's burgeoning middle class through their shows, interviews, movies, publicity stills and tournaments. Sooner or later, Crosby's enthusiasm for golf showed up in everything he did.

"You can't quantify what Bing Crosby did for golf, but you can't overstate it either," Fay says. The 1971 Crosby, with the tournament's namesake providing the commentary for ABC, was watched in 11.5 million homes. Golf was good to Bing, and Bing was good for golf. The performer once said, "If I were asked what single thing has given me the most gratification in my long and sometimes pedestrian career, I would have to say it is this tournament." Remembering that quote the other day, Nathaniel was struck by his father's use of *pedestrian.*

In his private life, many of Bing's most trusted friendships — notably with George Coleman, a well-placed and well-known golf personage — came through the game. Nathaniel inherited the friendship. When he was at Miami he played dozens of rounds with Coleman at Seminole, where Coleman was the longtime president. Hope was another trusted friend. Above all the other things they were together, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby were golf partners, Nathaniel says.

Today, if Nathaniel envies anything about Hope's legacy, it is this: that the Hope name, five years after the comedian's death, is still on the Hope tournament. The Crosby name was taken off the Pebble Beach tournament in 1985 by Kathryn Crosby after she and the tournament's board of directors got into a dispute over who would run the tournament and dispense its invitations. Nathaniel didn't want his father's name withdrawn, but when the fight was coming to a boil he was playing the European tour and not in a position to do anything to simmer things down. "My mom and I are close now," he says, "but that was a tough time."

For years, much of Nathaniel's identity was wrapped up in the Crosby. After his father's death in 1977, Nathaniel, at 16, became the official tournament host. He remembers getting a call from Tom Weiskopf, who wanted a friend invited as an amateur. Weiskopf said to the teenager, just old enough to drive, "I owe you a favor." Tom Weiskopf! The man was a golfing god to the young Crosby. Nathaniel served on the board that runs the tournament until about five years ago. He had stopped going to meetings when his first marriage was breaking up, and he was told that his services were no longer needed. He was upset but not hurt. He knew what the Clambake had turned into: a business. His father's golfing get-together is now in the netherworld, with yesterday's fog.

The demise of the old Crosby — despite the spectacular setting, the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am has become a second-tier event with little star power — is a painful reminder to Nathaniel that his father's fame is fading. "When they were both alive, Dad was a lot more famous than Bob Hope," Crosby says. "But Dad's name, image and likeness have not been promoted aggressively." That may sound cold and calculating, but it's also true. He hopes there will someday be another Crosby pro-am, maybe on the Champions tour. Nathaniel Crosby, a self-described marketing man and entrepreneur, sees how expertly the names, images and likenesses of Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra are marketed today. He would like to see dozens of Crosby golf courses and Crosby restaurants. He'd like to see stores and websites dedicated to selling Crosby albums and movies and radio shows and TV specials. (According to one study Nathaniel cites, the name most associated with Christmas, after Santa Claus, is Bing Crosby.) But the licensing of the Crosby name is controlled by Kathryn Crosby, who has her own ideas, and Nathaniel's business focus these days is elsewhere. He is immersed in launching an all-purpose golf advertising agency, where he plans to use the lessons from his Orlimar experience — he calls it "the 1-800, direct-response, profitable advertising model" — to sell and deliver all things golf: clubs, devices, real estate, vacations, you name it. His father was an astute and innovative businessman and a careful spender. Nathaniel would like to think he's exactly the same.

During a recent lunch at a roadside cafe near his home, a TV played an infomercial for SkyCaddie, and Crosby made educated guesses about its particulars: who shot it, how the device was priced, where the owners were buying their media. Later, the Ray Charles classic *Georgia on My Mind* played over the restaurant speakers. Crosby listened to Charles's raspy voice and distinctive timing, backed by a string section and a choir of angelic '50s-style singers, and said, "Dad would have loved this arrangement." In the recording Charles gave meaning to every word and phrase. Bing did the same thing.

The lives of two of Bing's four sons with Dixie Lee, his first wife, ended in suicide, and now all four are dead. Nathaniel knew his much-older half brothers, but never lived with them. Between Bing's first family and his second there was "something like the Great Wall of China," Nathaniel says. Bing's second go-around, with Kathryn and the three children they had together, was by all accounts a happy experience. Bing was 54 when he married 23-year-old Kathryn Grant in 1957, and he was 58 when Nathaniel was born. If Bing were alive today he'd be 105. He was easily old enough to have been Nathaniel's grandfather.

But he had energy, and he nurtured the interest of each child, as Nathaniel explains it, and made a particular effort to spend one-on-one time with each of the kids. Harry, the oldest of the trio, a successful Wall Street investment banker and investor, had an early interest in nature and often went on hunting and fishing trips with his father. Mary, who lives in Malibu with her

husband and children and who still acts occasionally, spent time with her father on various overseas father-daughter vacations, and Bing played an active role in getting her started as an actress. Nathaniel and his father were often on the golf course together, or at Candlestick Park, watching baseball or football, surrounded by other paying spectators. Bing wore his celebrity so comfortably that he could go anywhere and not be bothered. Nathaniel remembers going to a 49ers game with his father, settling into their seats and then hearing his father say, "I'll be right back." He went to the field, sang the national anthem and returned immediately to his seat and to his son.

When Bing joined Nathaniel at the World Junior at Torrey Pines in '77, he brought a big, clumsy box camera to the course, intent on getting a shot of Nathaniel and Bobby Clampett together. "Dad was sure that Clampett would be the next Nicklaus," Nathaniel says. As for Nathaniel's golf, Bing got a kick out of it. He had a son who was a very good junior golfer. He told an interviewer, "I think Nathaniel will be very pleased to play high-level amateur golf." Nathaniel heard that interview and later said, "Wrong, Dad." (You can't keep a good talker down.) But Bing didn't crowd his son, and at Torrey Pines that year, among many other places, he watched Nathaniel play from a fairway away. He gave Nathaniel space. "I had a great father," Nathaniel says. "The three of us [children] each got what we needed from him." Nathaniel got golf — and words.

Father and son both loved golf in Spain, and while playing in Europe, Nathaniel took a special interest in the stylish play of Seve Ballesteros and Jose Maria Olazabal. He can tell you the tournaments at which he finished ahead of them. When he played in the 1986 Spanish Open at the La Moraleja Golf Club he experienced the first migraine of his life. It was so severe he had to spend a night in a hospital. (Such headaches plagued him for years but no longer do.) That it came at the course where his father played his last round and took his last breath, Nathaniel Crosby sees as a coincidence and nothing more. Bing Crosby's last words were, "That was a great game of golf, fellas."

Except for the phrases he borrows from his father, there's nothing about Nathaniel that readily brings to mind Bing. He doesn't have his father's cool, mellow speaking voice or his lively eyes or prominent ears or slim physique. The heels of Nathaniel's loafers sort of drag across the floor — he's not light on his feet, as his father was. He has never run from being the son of Bing Crosby, and he's happy to talk about him, but he has never turned it into a full-time gig, either. For the past half-dozen years or so, as he divorced and remarried, Nathaniel played golf sparingly and worked mostly as a consultant. "Sheila and I were both on the receiving end of our divorces, and we were among the walking wounded," he says, meaning that neither initiated their breakups. He's admirably open. "But we've figured out a way to make this whole *Brady Bunch* thing work." Now that his home life is whole again, Nathaniel is looking to return to competitive golf and, more significant, get back into the business of golf. "This time I'm swinging for the fences," he says, speaking of the business he is planning to launch. He doesn't expect to win another U.S. Amateur, but he'd like to have a shot at a U.S. Senior Amateur when he turns 55.

The garage at his North Palm Beach house is filled with golf clubs, surfboards, fishing equipment, tennis rackets and all the other accoutrements of the affluent Florida life. Except at Christmastime you won't hear much of Bing's music in the house. Bing's legacy shows up in other ways (some of Nathaniel's kids are playing golf too), and almost every day Nathaniel is moved to recall his father in some specific way. Maybe you remember Bing's old Minute Maid spots. When Nathaniel drops his voice and recites his father's famous tagline — "there's no doubt about it" — you'd swear Bing Crosby were still alive.

Michael Bamberger

April Plays the Fiddle on 53rd Street

Harry Lillis Crosby – better known by his nickname, Bing – was one of the most successful and influential entertainers of all time. Beginning as a band singer, he became a top recording and movie star and hosted his own radio and television programs. Bing Crosby conquered every American entertainment medium during his career and made an everlasting impression upon the American consciousness. The Donnell Media Center is proud to mount a second series dedicated to this consummate performer. (Introduction to the program notes for *Bing is Back*)

Spring and Bing came around hand in hand this year thanks to The Donnell Media Center of The New York Public Library. Inspired by the unprecedented success in 2004 of its survey *Celebrating the Crosbys,* The Center heeded popular demand and with the guidance of one of its directors, Joseph Yranski, programmed *Bing is Back,* an ambitious five week retrospective which was launched on March 27th, 2008 with a screening of *High Tor.* Bob DeFlores, archivist for the Crosby family, introduced the film, which he had digitally restored from the 35mm print of the theatrical cut version. (This manifestation, which differs in several ways from the original CBS broadcast, was given its world premiere at the 2005 Film Society of Lincoln Center Crosby series *What a Swell Party,* which was my pleasure to serve as curator.) Mr. DeFlores detailed the magnificent restoration, citing the painstaking optical process by which the deteriorated white edge was eliminated and certain blemished parts were returned to their original brilliance. He commended the Crosby family for

undertaking this endeavor, and hinted that there may be more renewed treasures to come.

Bing and Julie Andrews in *High Tor*

Mr. DeFlores provided background information. *High Tor* was the first film made for television and contains Julie Andrews' film debut. The production, which cost upwards of five hundred thousand dollars, took place over twelve days. Crosby recorded seven numbers for the film on December 27th, 1955. Bobby Jordan of *The Dead End Kids* fame can be glimpsed as one of the marooned Dutch sailors. The director James Neilson had a distinguished career in television, among his credits being *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Bonanza*, *The Rifleman* and *Batman*. The enthusiastic response to *High Tor* was indicative of the entire survey.

The centerpiece of this celebration occurred on Sunday, April 6th when Kathryn Crosby performed her show, *Bing, Bob and Me*. She was accompanied by pianist and arranger Richard Danley (who had regularly assisted Kitty Carlisle in these capacities). The show consisted of two acts: *Heroes*, a new salute to the special bond which Bing and Bob Hope shared with the servicemen and women of World War Two; and *Kathryn Crosby Remembers Bing*, her popular review of nostalgic reminiscences and wistful songs delineating their romance and marriage. (For this second act Kathryn was clad in the Jean Louis pale blue chiffon dress which she wore on *The Hollywood Palace* of December 21st, 1968.)

Kathryn opened *Heroes* by singing *Strike up the Band* during which she could barely contain her emotion as she noticed that her daughter–in–law Mihaela and grandson Nicholas were in attendance in the front row. (A few weeks hence Mihaela would give birth to Kathryn Rose.)

Heroes utilizes film clips to illustrate the selfless work which Hope and Crosby undertook to raise morale and money for the war effort. The capacity audience was treated to footage from some of the stars' numerous charitable golf matches and performances, such as the famous *Mairzy Doats* number which the duo performed backed by John Scott Trotter. Excerpts from *Swingtime with the Stars* (we followed the bouncing ball on *Don't Fence Me In*), *All Star Bond Rally* and *The Shining Future* (with Bing singing *The Road to Victory*) evoked a bygone era of stellar altruism. Mrs. Crosby poignantly remarked, ***Bing hated to beg, but for his heroes he did.***

An amusing anecdote was recalled. Bing, along with comics Rags Ragland and Phil Silvers, toured the Pacific Northwest on behalf of the military. In Seattle, Washington they came upon a toddler who had become separated from its mother. Bing tried to comfort the baby. When he looked closer, he remarked, *My God, a little girl. I haven't seen one of those in years!* This served as an introduction to Kathryn singing *Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral.*

It was my distinct honor to be the featured guest vocalist for *Heroes*. To demonstrate the conflicting moods of enforced optimism and transient romance which raged during the war, Kathryn offered a wistful rendition of *Blue Skies* which was immediately followed by my delivery of *Just One of Those Things*, sung first in a slow tempo and then gaining speed as Kathryn reprised the Berlin classic in counter harmony.

Shortly thereafter Kathryn recounted an incident of Bing's wartime life. *On July 4th, 1944 Bing and Bob Hope sold seven hundred thousand dollars worth of war bonds at the Los Angeles Country Club. Afterwards Bing drove directly to The Hollywood Bowl where he rehearsed with Lieutenant Colonel Eddie Dunstedter and his one hundred and fifty piece Army Air Force Orchestra. Sitting quietly to the side were three servicemen: Marines Ira Hayes and Rene Gagnon and Navy corpsman John Bradley who raised the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima.*

One of the songs which Bing performed that Independence Day was *Long Ago and Far Away*. As Kathryn introduced me back onto the stage to sing this Kern evergreen, a transcendent moment took place; and as the notes poured out an individual homage was made to an extraordinary era which, although predating my existence, has always been made palpable by the familiar presence that embodied it. The lyrics attained a deeply personal meaning. ***Chills ran up and down my spine.***

The grand finale of this memorable matinee began with Kathryn singing an obscure verse with a tropical feel which gave way to an excerpt from the 1971 NBC special *Bing Crosby and the Sounds of Christmas*. As the

debonair star rendered his most famous tune, Kathryn added her voice and beckoned her son Harry and myself to join her on stage. As we blended in song the casting of a magical spell was complete. Outside April may have been playing the fiddle, but the surpassing appeal of *White Christmas* was realized as the exhilarated audience formed a grand chorus.

Kathryn, Harry Crosby and Martin join in singing "White Christmas"

After the final curtain Kathryn chatted at length in the auditorium with many friends and fans.

The excitement continued throughout the month as a Crosby classic was showcased on each successive Wednesday: *We're Not Dressing*, *Waikiki Wedding*, *Here Comes the Waves* and *Double or Nothing*, which was enhanced by a message which Mary Carlisle wished to share. It was read by Mr. Yranski prior to the film.

When I made my second film with Bing Crosby, Double or Nothing, he was very busy between set ups and would go to his dressing room to work on his radio show, do business about his Del Mar racetrack and other work. But on the first day of the picture he asked me "Do you play backgammon?" I said that I did. He then asked "Do you have a board?' I replied that I did and he then said "Bring it to the set tomorrow."

The next day I asked, "Do you know how to play?" And Bing said "We'll play for money." "Ok," I said, and proceeded to trounce him unmercifully. I asked him "Do you know how to play?" He answered that he did not, but he wanted to play anyway. Well I won, won, won (a rather large amount of money). He didn't pay off his debt, and I didn't mention it to him.

Then when we started to work on the film Dr. Rhythm Crosby excitedly said to me "Don't forget to bring the board with you?" He continued to lose until one day he said "let's double the stakes!" We did and he finally won, then he redoubled the stakes again and the debt was cleared and we never played backgammon again!! You see Bing had to be the best at everything including a game he really didn't know. Later on **he** ***would invite my husband and me to play in his invitational golf matches, but I decided never to play with Bing again, even though my husband did for many years. In this manner I remained one of his good friends.***

At the time of the first Donnell Crosby series, television personality Regis Philbin tendered to me his regrets saying that, due to scheduling conflicts, he would be unable to attend any of the events. He would be grateful, however, should he be notified of any subsequent Crosby tributes at the library. Once the program for *Bing is Back* was ready it was forwarded by me to his office. It was most gratifying that Mr. Philbin was present for the final selection, *The Road to Hong Kong*, on April 30th. Once the movie was over he confided to me, ***It was so great to see those guys again.*** The very next day, on *Live with Regis and Kelly*, Mr. Philbin enthused about his experience to his attentive co-host.

All this month they're playing old Bing Crosby movies at The New York City Library - downstairs in the big theater on 53rd street. I haven't had a chance to go on a Wednesday afternoon to see any of them. So I went to see one yesterday. And I really enjoyed it - Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in The Road to Hong Kong. You can't beat that. And on the big screen – you don't get the full impact until they're up there on the big screen. Kelly exclaimed, ***Oh, Wow! Fantastic!*** Mr. Philbin stifled a chuckle, wafting on a gleeful memory.

The building which houses The Donnell Library is slated for demolition, ending a venerable midtown institution which deserves a grateful valediction for enriching the lives of New Yorkers. A jewel in the city's cultural crown will vanish, but the Donnell tradition of dedicated scholarship and passionate erudition will be cherished always.

Postscripts

Arrangements were made for Kathryn Crosby to perform *Heroes* at the annual New York Ex – Prisoners of War Convention on June 13th, 2008 at The Nevele Grande Hotel located in The Catskill Mountains in Ellenville, New York.

Another opportunity to enjoy Bing on the big screen will occur on July 30th, 2008 at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. On that date a 35mm print of *The Bells of St. Mary's* will be shown as part of a film series devoted to Ingrid Bergman and her leading men. Professor

Jeanine Basinger, chair of the university's film studies department and curator of its cinema archives (which includes the Bergman collection) has invited me to introduce this classic and to provide an overview of the Crosby film legacy.

Martin McQuade

Other Crosby fans that were at The Donnell Media Center put their comments on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

Re Kathryn.

A most enjoyable performance. Thought the improvement from "part one" was very noticeable. The turnout was also very encouraging. Sure we'll be hearing additional comments shortly. (**Bob White**)

I agree. Excellent performance. More Bing clips have been added since the last time I saw Kathryn perform this. It was really wonderful. Kathryn looked great and seemed to really be enjoying herself. Martin also joined Kathryn for two numbers during the show. All-in-all a great show. I agree also about the crowd. The auditorium was packed. Harry, his 3 year old son, and very pregnant wife were also in attendance. Harry came on stage at the end to join in singing "White Christmas". It was lovely to see the very real affection between him and his mother. To Judy and Martin, thank you so much for arranging all of this. It was a great effort. (**Sally Monaghan**)

Have to agree with Sally's review. It was a very enjoyable afternoon. Kathryn adds layers to her show each time I see it. (**Jane Stoutenborough**)

BING ON THE BOX

A five yearly cycle seems to be recognized as an appropriate occasion on which to commemorate past events and Bing's 105th birthday anniversary proved to be no exception. In Britain that was mainly via the record playing presenters; mostly on regional radio and, as is usual, mostly by way of timely reminders and requests from avid supporters of the Crosby cause.

During the course of sixteen Sunday programmes since we last went to press, **Anne Hopper** has managed to clock up around thirty Bing tracks! With such a wide variety of artistes to choose from, that is an impressive tally and indicates his popularity not only by her selecting Bing so frequently but also because of listener requests. These range from as far back as 1934 with "I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin'" through to 1976 and the Pete Moore accompanied "Come Share The Wine". Radio broadcasts are also featured; notably "Hand Holdin' Music" with Walter O'Keefe and Rudy Vallee from Philco Radio Time in April 1949 wherein Bing takes some musical ribbing from his guest stars. A special 'birthday bash' gave us yet another Aaronson accompanied 1934 track with "Love In Bloom", the rather more challenging Cole Porter number, "Begin The Beguine", and from the film *The Birth Of The Blues* that joyful romp "The Waiter, The Porter And The Upstairs Maid", with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden joining in the fun: all rounded off with the very appropriate "There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About". Don't forget to listen in or contact for a request. No excuses: just do it!

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Hartington Street
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HIDDEN AWAY

Russell Davies is a hard act to follow and though the Crosby content over the period between issues of BING magazine is minimal in quantity the quality of his Celebration of the Art, Craft and Inspiration of the Popular Song is quite fascinating. He was to remind us that the rather downbeat "Linger A Little Longer In The Twilight" and the equally lugubrious "We're A Couple Of Soldiers" followed by the gloom of Yip Harburg's "Brother Can You Spare A Dime", all recorded by Bing on the 25th October 1932, was immediately put to flight by an impromptu duet of Bing and Lennie Hayton [on piano] with the exhilarating "Sweet Sue" which Jack Kapp obviously considered so 'non-commercial' that it was confined to the vaults until its sensational release thirty-four years later! Well, it was certainly sensational to us Crosby collectors at the time!

From the final album of the sadly concluded Jonzo series, JZCD-51, Russell chose to feature "Play A Simple Melody", at the same time offering his congratulations to John McNicholas for a remarkable achievement, and thanks to Ernest Sutkowski and Stan White for the valuable part they play in ensuring that he, and other presenters, are the recipients of such hard to obtain CDs. Gary Giddins' *A Pocketful Of Dreams* is Russell's Crosby bible and to recognize this similarly remarkable contribution to the Crosby legacy, Russell noted Gary's sixtieth birthday this year and played the original Lennie Hayton accompanied, and easily the best, 1933 version of "Home On The Range", 'the most resonant of Bing's cowboy records by far.' He read out excerpts about that recording and the song itself from pages 338-339 of Gary's book including the occasion of Will Rogers and Wiley Post's death in a 'plane crash when 'a little shaky from the sauce' Bing struggled to remember the words on his memorial broadcast. Following "You Took Advantage Of Me" and "That's How Much I Love You" Russell preempted the three-

hours-ahead Academy Of Country Music Awards Ceremony in the States by playing Bing's 1946 recording with The Calico Kids of "Country Style"; a Burke and Van Heusen crafted, stylized tribute to The Square Dance featured in *Welcome Stranger*. Catch Russell Davies on BBC Radio 2 Sunday evenings at 9p.m.

OSCAR HITS

A man who never misses a 'composer anniversary' is **David Lowe** of BBC Radio Bristol and he was to tell us that Jay Livingston and Ray Evans produced more Oscar winning hits than any others; their songs having huge hit status. Bing recorded several, including "Mona Lisa", "Golden Earrings", "Silver Bells" and the one that David played; "Home Cookin'". An interesting footnote being that Doris Day thought "Que Sera Sera" was a bit of a 'kiddie' song and didn't like it at all. It went on to become the biggest hit of her career and won an Oscar at the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts And Sciences where it had to be submitted as "Whatever Will Be Will Be" as they do not permit non-English titles to be submitted! 6th April heralded lyricist Leo Robin's 108th anniversary. With composer Ralph Rainger [killed in a 'plane crash in 1942] he wrote lyrics for songs in a couple of Bing movies; *She Loves Me Not* and *Here Is My Heart* with David Lowe featuring "Love In Bloom" and "June In January" from Bing's autobiography album.

Should "San Antonio Rose" have the prefix 'New'? When asked to play it, David had to correct the listener on this point, especially as the 78 rpm record does show the full title. Readers will know that this was a big hit for Bing and one of the best with his brother Bob's band.

"Mighty Lak A Rose" may not be to everyone's taste but Bing is well served by a trio of accompanists in the Lehman Engel Orchestra, The Song Spinners and Ethel Smith at the organ! Maggie Ryan requested "Sunday"

for Stan White's birthday and "Little Lady Make Believe" would also have gone down well with Stan. For fans of Bing and Rosie the radio version of "Let's Take A Walk Around The Block" was among several other Crosby vocals accorded to West Country listeners on this very agreeable programme.

Dewi Griffith conducted a Greatest Entertainer Of Your Lifetime poll a mere ten years ago and Bing was the number one man – as we would all expect! On his String Of Pearls BBC Radio Wales programme he referred to this whilst featuring Bing on a track or two who's titles appear elsewhere here. **Desmond Carrington** still does his best for Bing up there in Scotland. Five great duets; "Well, Did You Evah?" with Frank, "Ya-Ta-Ta, Ya-Ta-Ta" with Judy, "Fancy Meeting You Here" with Rosemary and the amiable double helping of "Enjoy Yourself" and "Let's Do It Again" with Brer Bob. That latter title was also aired on **Howard Leader's** BBC Radio Lincolnshire programme Balladeers. Howard likes the up-tempo tracks as illustrated by "Walking The Floor Over You", "When My Dreamboat Comes Home", "Pale Moon" and "Yes, Indeed!" with Connee Boswell and Bob Crosby's Bob Cats to mention just a few. We still hear just a bit of Bing occasionally on **David Jacobs's** BBC 2 national radio programme; **"You're The Top"** with Mitzi Gaynor and dear Rosie Clooney again with "On A Slow Boat To China". "When Day Is Done" is rarely heard on radio so well done to this particular DJ for featuring it.

MORE RARE TO RADIO

Mike Carey of BBC Radio Derby is well acquainted with the ICC, which he promotes on his programme. He receives a copy of this magazine, being very enamoured of the quality and generous in his praise. His Memorable Melodies is also praiseworthy and Bing is featured frequently, quite often unexpectedly. For example; a promotional disc for the film *Double Or Nothing* during which Bing sings the Ralph Freed – Burton Lane gentle rebuke "Smarty". A long excerpt from a 15th February 1953 Jack Benny Show also figured on Mike's programme. Bing guests on this Lucky Strike show, purportedly sent by Dennis Day to substitute for him. Bing solos on "Open Up Your Heart" and later duets with his brother Bob - a regular on the show - with a parody version of "Way Back Home". Lots of humour centred around Benny's cultivated meanness involving Bing, Bob and, of course, Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson. Between times Mike was to play a varied selection of musical Crosbyana including "Little Jack Frost Get Lost", "Count Your Blessings", "Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan", and two of the four tracks from the January 1951 session with Tommy Dorsey "Without A Word Of Warning" and "You Gotta Show Me". Thanks are due to Arthur Blood for a transcript of Mike's contribution to the Crosby cause via a delightful CD!

A count of no less than twenty-five tracks [some must have escaped the net!] have been heard on **Bill And Angela Rennells' Harmony Night** that goes out on various BBC local stations in the Thames Valley area. Being principally a request programme it's always worth contacting them by post to Bill & Angela Rennells, Harmony Night, BBC Radio Oxford, P.O. Box 95.2, Oxford OX2 7YL; by 'phone on 08459 311 111 or via email at bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk . Our efforts were rewarded with four of the seven tracks played to

commemorate Bing's birthday. Those selected being "Just One Of Those Things", "My Isle Of Golden Dreams", "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling", "In The Chapel In The Moonlight", "Along The Navajo Trail", "Remember Me?" and "The Pleasure Of Your Company". The happy couple is oblivious of the occasional, rare alternative take they play and this time around only one track from radio: "How Are Things In Glocca Morra?" from a 1947 Philco Show. There might have been two had they been able to fulfill a request for "I Only Have Eyes For You" which was introduced by Dick Powell in the 1934 film *Dames* and duetted with Bing on both a Philco and Chesterfield show. Bing also gave it a whirl with Al Jolson on the same sponsorship.

WHAT A TWERP!

Well, that was **Paul Barnes'** comment on learning from his guest, John Petters that someone had written to a jazz publication saying 'Why are you wasting space in a jazz magazine reviewing a Crosby album?' Petters, an East Anglian based drummer - band leader – arranger - vocalist, was quick to respond to this musical ignoramus and set about putting him right in no uncertain terms. Just to prove the point Paul weighed in with "St. Louis Blues", "Moonburn" and "Shoe Shine Boy" all of which amply demonstrate Bing's innate sense of jazz singing, being the first white originator of this art form as was made clear by both John Petters and Paul himself. Other tracks delivered with Bing's distinctive jazz phrasing were "My Pet" the take –1 version during which he scats 'sweet and kind', 'perfect gem', etc. rather than boo-boo-boo on other takes. For the birthday weekend the duet with Miss Boswell of "An Apple For The Teacher" was again a perfect example with Bing being well served by Connee's on the beat, southern inflections. Written by Johnny Burke, 'the poet' as Bing called him this song was sung by Bing in two consecutive films: *The Star Maker* and *Road To Singapore*.

Most of the best of 'the jazzin' Bing Crosby' gets featured on Gold For Grown Ups so it was no surprise to hear "Then You've Never Been Blue", "One Sweet Letter From You" and the V-Disc, solo version of "Small Fry". The chosen track for the May calendar song, "Let Me Look At You", caused a problem - Paul couldn't find it! But, ever resourceful, he selected another 'Let' song, "Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella", with the Bob Scobey outfit which was a very welcome substitution. "Let Me Look At You" first came to light on the Geoff Milne release of the *Rare Style* album which features that wonderful photo of Bing with Buttons from *Emperor Waltz*. Less obvious for a jazz orientated programme were "Two Cigarettes In The Dark", "A Fella With An Umbrella" and "Indian Summer" a delightful duet with Dorothy Kirsten from a 1950 Chesterfield Show. Be sure to catch Paul [requests usually catered for] and spread the word as his continuance relies on listener counts, and there have been disconcerting contract considerations.

Paul Barnes, BBC The Forum, Millennium Plains, Norwich NR2 1BH

Saturdays, 18.00 [Essex 19.00] until 21.00 (BST) on world wide web: www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk or tune in to

BBC Radio Cambs - 95.7 and 96.0 FM
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BBC Radio Suffolk - 95.5 and 103.9 and 104.6 FM

THIS 'N' THAT

Among the television 'sightings' of Bing we have had an appearance on a documentary about Irish singer Val Doonican showing Bing with Val on a golf course; an excerpt of "Three Little Words" during an episode of the well crafted comedy-drama, *Love Soup* and a less than complimentary appearance as a full face, life size image on the naked back of a character in *The Invisibles*. He'd been on a drunken spree and to round off the revelry went for a tattoo: "Bing Crosby! What were you drinking; kitchen cleaner!" expostulated his astonished partner in crime on seeing this item of artwork.

And from Stateside a similar bit of reportage from **Jon Oye**: "I was nodding off on the couch a few minutes ago at the end of a Seinfeld re-run when I was suddenly pulled from my near slumber by the sound of Bing singing "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby". The TV source was an unlikely one; an irrelevant program on FOX called TMZ and the subject under discussion being Jennifer Lopez's newborn twins. I guess it's nice to know that this item of 'cutting edge' news item rated a seventy year-old Crosby recording and that someone on the TMZ staff had a working knowledge of the Crosby catalogue. A nice surprise to hear Bing on network television no matter what the context!"

Michael Freedland, who presented the excellent Bing Crosby Trail last year, had a new series entitled *The Bob Hope Trail* which started on Friday 22nd February at 7pm on BBC Radio 2 in the UK. It was a six-parter and there must have been something about Bing in there somewhere! Unfortunately I was unable to listen.

Road To Morocco was shown in February on Sky Classics and Channel 4 in the UK screened *The Bells Of St. Mary's* on Tuesday 6th May at 12.30pm, a little late for the actual birthday, but at least something starring Bing is better than nothing! Our American members fared better with various television and radio broadcasts and in particular Turner Classic Movies commemorated Bing's 105th a day early - May 2 - with a day-long airing

of some of his popular films.

Alias Jesse James	TCM
Going My Way	HBO
High Society	TCM
High Time	HBO
Holiday Inn	HBO
Man on Fire	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Pennies from Heaven	TCM
Road to Bali	TCM
Stagecoach,	Cinemax
The Bells of St. Mary's	TCM
The Country Girl	TCM
The Road to Hong Kong	TCM
The Country Girl	TCM
The Greatest Show on Earth	Cinemax

HOT JAZZ SATURDAY NIGHT

Rob Bamberger is creator, producer and host of the WAMU 88.5 vintage jazz show which first began airing in 1980. On the 3rd May this spring, after the first hour of various jazz groups, orchestras and singers, Rob turned to Bing for the next two hours by way of a recognition not only of Bing's 105th birthday but also of his jazz roots and the many up-tempo tracks cut throughout his career. Over thirty tracks were played; mainly sourced from the Jonzo series though there were several from the Jasmine and MCA labels. **Wig Wiggins** reviews the programme elsewhere in this magazine but having heard it it's clear that by the end of the programme Rob's listeners should have been in no doubt about Bing's ability to compete with the best of the up-tempo jazz swingers and singers! Only one 'bluesy' number played, the Ellington track, but then Bing cut very few such, not being a melancholy person his character didn't always suit such songs; though "Black Moonlight", "I've Got To Pass Your House", "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "Summertime" are good examples of that musical idiom that might have had an airing.

MORE FROM STATESIDE

Sirius Radio Classics 118 also celebrated Bing's 105th birthday a day early as it aired a four-hour 'Happy Birthday Bing' block started at 10AM EDT 2nd May with a repeat airing at 6pm EDT. **Mary Crosby** hosted and offered a bit of insight into her dad's 30-plus years of radio as she introduced a number of Bing's programs, which included guests Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Al Jolson, Peggy Lee, and Bob Hope.

Bobby Fields has drawn our attention to his Stardust Dreams Program - WNJC-1360 AM and also WWW.wnjc1360.com. 8-9 PM (New York time) which goes out every Monday night and features plenty of Bing, Ella, Al Jolson and so on.

And finally **Greg Van Beek** reports on some other radio broadcasts:

"Yesterday (Friday, May 2nd), David Hendrickson did his 6th annual Bing Crosby birthday bash broadcast on 1420AM WJUB radio in Plymouth, WI. From 5am to 9am, it was solid Bing. No other artists were played. I taped some comments Thursday night which he aired as part of the show, so we were heard on WJUB this weekend! Between the 4 hours on Friday, and the 2 hour "Seems Like Old Times" show this afternoon, there's a lot of Bing wafting through the airwaves in Wisconsin as of late!

As part of its month long salute to actor Jimmy Stewart's centennial, Chuck Schaden's Those Were The Days on Chicago's WDCB 90.9FM [which airs each Saturday afternoon from 1-5pm] several of Bing's radio shows with Jimmy as guest were aired, complete and uncut:

May 17: Philco Radio Time, March 10, 1948
May 24: Philco Radio Time, April 6, 1949
May 31: Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, November 14, 1951. If you hadn't heard these it was a great opportunity to catch some vintage Bing on the wireless! WDCB can be heard on the internet via Real Audio or Windows Media at www.wdcb.org"

Until the next time!

Bert Bishop 16th June 2008

(Editor: Thanks, Bert. There were certainly plenty of shows marking Bing's birth date and your editor was interviewed by Craig Orndorff on the "Seems Like Old Times" programme on May 3. Craig was going to send me a CD of the show but it must still be in the post! Greg Van Beek heard the broadcast however and said that it was OK.)

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Dick Martin, who co-created and co-hosted *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* – a show which forever changed the face of television – died on May 24 of respiratory complications. He was 86. In addition to a 25-year career in nightclubs and the success of the *Laugh-In*, Dick Martin began a second career as a television director in 1976, starting with *The Bob Newhart Show*. By the time he retired from his second career, he had directed over 200 hours of television.

It was 1952 when Dan Rowan and Dick Martin met. They began playing nightclubs throughout America. Between 1962 and 1964, Martin – without Rowan – was a regular on *The Lucy Show*. Nat King Cole had originally opened the doors for Rowan and Martin in Las Vegas, and they were booked regularly as an opening act in Las Vegas and New York. They began making appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show* (a total of 18 times), the *Perry Como Show* (8 times), and *The Hollywood Palace* (10 times). They also appeared on the *Dean Martin Variety Show* on NBC and this was where they first worked with Bing on the April 13, 1967 episode. Bing also appeared with them on the *Carol Burnett Show* on October 11, 1969.

NBC approached Rowan and Martin to host their own variety show. Dan and Dick said they "had something a little different" in mind. NBC said, "Let's

give it a try" and *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* was born. They shot a special in September, 1967. NBC was not thrilled with the show, but critics around the country were so enthusiastic th

at NBC relented to a 13-week run beginning mid-season.

Dick Martin (right) with Bing and Dan Rowan on the Laugh-In.

Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In began their 13-show run in January, 1968. NBC put the show on opposite *The Lucy Show* and *Gunsmoke,* two mega-hits and nobody gave the show much of a chance – but by the eighth show, the *Laugh-In* was the number one show in the country. *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* taped 144 shows and went off the air in 1973. A feature of the show was numerous walk-on spots by famous celebrities and Bing duly appeared three times in 1969 and 1970.

Dan Rowan retired to France until his death from lymphatic cancer in 1987.

Cyd Charisse, the long-legged Texas beauty who danced with the Ballet Russe as a teenager and starred in MGM musicals with Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, died on June 17 after suffering an apparent heart attack,. She was 86. Her name was Tula Ellice Finklea when she was born in Amarillo, Texas, on March 8, 1922. From her earliest years she was called Sid, because her older brother couldn't say "sister." She was a sickly girl who started dancing lessons to build up her strength after a bout with polio. At 14 she auditioned for the head of the famed Ballet Russe, and became part of the corps de ballet and toured the U.S. and Europe. To appear with the nearly all-Russian company, she was first billed as Celia Siderova, than as Maria Istromena. At one point during the European tour, she met up again with Nico Charisse, a handsome young dancer she had studied with for a time in Los Angeles. They married in Paris in 1939.

The Ballet Russe disbanded after the war broke out, and the newlyweds returned to Hollywood. In 1942, a son, Nicky, was born. In 1948, the year after she and Nico divorced, Charisse married singer Tony Martin. Her second son, Tony Jr., was born in 1950.

Classically trained, she could dance anything, from a pas de deux in 1946's *Ziegfeld Follies* to the lowdown Mickey Spillane satire of 1953's *The Band Wagon* (with Astaire). She also forged a popular song-and-dance partnership on television and in nightclub appearances with her husband, Tony Martin. Her height was 5 feet, 6 inches, but in high heels and full-length stockings, she seemed serenely tall, and she moved with extraordinary grace. Her flawless beauty and jet-black hair contributed to an aura of perfection that Astaire described in his 1959 memoir, "Steps in Time," as "beautiful dynamite."

The 1952 classic *Singin' in the Rain* marked a breakthrough. When Arthur Freed was dissatisfied with another dancer who had been cast, Charisse inherited the role and danced with Kelly in the "Broadway Melody" number that climaxed the movie. She stunned critics and audiences with her 25-foot Chinese silk scarf that floated in the air with the aid of a wind machine. Charisse also danced with Kelly in *Brigadoon, It's Always Fair Weather* and *Invitation to the Dance*. She missed what might have been her greatest opportunity: to appear with Kelly in the 1951 Academy Award winner, *An American in Paris*. She was pregnant, and Leslie Caron was cast in the role. *Silk Stockings* in 1957 marked the end of her dancing career in films, as well as the twilight of the movie musical. Bing and Cyd worked together only once and that was on the Hollywood Palace show of December 24, 1966.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing.

James Van Heusen was one of the most prolific song writers of the golden age of popular music.

In the summer of 1974, while recording interviews with Bing's family and friends, I spent an afternoon with him and his wife, Bobbe, at their ranch style home in Palm Springs. On his grand piano were visible reminders of his Hollywood success, four Oscars and an Emmy. A personable, charming man, he was blessed with a great sense of humour. During the filming of the "Road movies" he often contributed amusing lines that Bing and Bob worked into the script.

I was privileged to meet Jimmy again and introduce him at the 1981 unveiling of the Crosby bronze statue at Gonzaga University. At that memorable event he concluded his well chosen words by acclaiming Bing as "the greatest singer of popular songs of all time."

Gord introduces Jimmy Van Heusen

He was born January 26, 1913 in Syracuse, New

York; his real name was Edward Chester Babcock. While working as a young disk jockey in his home town, one of his associates suggested a name change for his radio career. A billboard, in view from their studio window, was an advertisement for Van Heusen apparel. Young Mr. Babcock liked the sound of the shirt makers name and adopted it as his own.

Searching for a new first name, his friend suggested a cousin's well respected name, James. Those two simple suggestions by a co-worker gave birth to one of the most respected nom de plumes in show business.

It was amusing how his second real name, "Chester", was often inserted into the scripts of Crosby and Hope radio broadcasts and the "Road" movies.

During our initial meeting at his home he recalled the circumstances of how he first heard Bing's voice: "I was only a teenager when I began working in radio and heard the Rhythm Boys' recording of 'The Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together'. The verse was sung by a beautiful baritone voice, the likes of which I had never heard before—and I was a fan from that moment on."

An accomplished pianist and a peerless popular composer, he collaborated with several lyricists but primarily with two gifted poets, Johnny Burke ('Sunday, Monday or Always', 'Moonlight Becomes You', 'Swinging on a Star', etc.) and Sammy Cahn ('Love and Marriage', 'All the Way', 'High Hopes', etc.).

The Van Heusen name has been prominent in the careers of both Bing and Frank Sinatra. "Crosby was idolized by Sinatra," he emphasized. "Bing was such a great star, such a great singer and such a great guy that he was Frank's inspiration. Sinatra wanted to be as big as Crosby. Bing in turn was fascinated with Frank. He admired him for having his own style, and unlike other popular singers, didn't copy him. There were not too many originals and Bing was just the guy to recognize an original."

Jimmy Van Heusen (centre) helps Bing and Bob with the songs from Zanzibar. Johnny Burke is on the right and Victor Schertzinger watches.

Van Heusen ballads were written with relative ease or considerable thought. "'Moonlight Becomes You' took about a month and a half to write," he recalled. "It took us as long to write 'Sunday, Monday or Always' as it takes to play it. I played it through once and Johnny Burke said excitedly, 'that's exactly the song we need.'

"With Crosby you didn't write too lush a song—too gushy a song. He didn't like a song that was like that. He was an incomparable balladeer and the most versatile song stylist of all time."

A favourite Van Heusen anecdote was how he and Johnny Burke were inspired to write their most famous novelty number, 'Swinging On a Star'. It came about when Leo McCarey was making plans to direct his Academy Award winning film, *Going My Way*.

"The movie involved a cast of priests and nuns. The working title of the film was *The Padre*, until we wrote one of the songs for the score, 'Going My Way'. The director, Leo McCarey, thought it was a better title for the film.

"We had one very special assignment for the score. We had to write a song that reflected the Ten Commandments for the priest to sing to a group of Dead End Kids. These young hooligans were stealing things, breaking windows and terrorizing their neighbourhood. The song had to be a catchy sermon set to music that would reflect the golden rule.

"What was required was a 'do-gooder' song that the priest could sing to them on their own intellectual level. Johnny and I struggled and struggled for quite some time to figure out a way that we could find the inspiration for this special song.

"One day before shooting we were invited by Bing for dinner at his house. His four boys were young kids at that time. Gary, the oldest, was being unruly and Bing was trying to keep him in line. Gary was being stubborn and sloppy at the dinner table and Bing said to him, 'so you want to be a pig, eh, or would you rather be a mule?' Burke's face lit up and I looked at him and we knew that we had our song. We went home and the song was written the next day. It went on to win the Academy Award and became a children's classic and one of Bing's golden records."

I was privileged to know and socialize with Jimmy and corresponded with him until his passing at age 77 in 1990. A composer of staggering talent, he will forever hold a special place in the legacy of Crosbyana.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor's Note: Excerpts from Gord's interviews with James Van Heusen are on Parts 1, 2, 7, 8 and the Epilogue of his CD anthology, "The Crosby Years" – see Trading Post.)

Seasons (continued)

In our last issue, we reproduced extracts from a 'thread' on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum regarding the *Seasons* album. There have been further comments and even a suggestion that some tracks contained 'echo'. Ken Barnes responded and as usual he makes fascinating reading.

I have read with interest the recent exchanges between Nicholas and Steve Fay regarding the recording of "Seasons." I'll come to the subject of "reverb" in a moment, but first let me say that the songs were not recorded in the same sequence as they appear on the album.

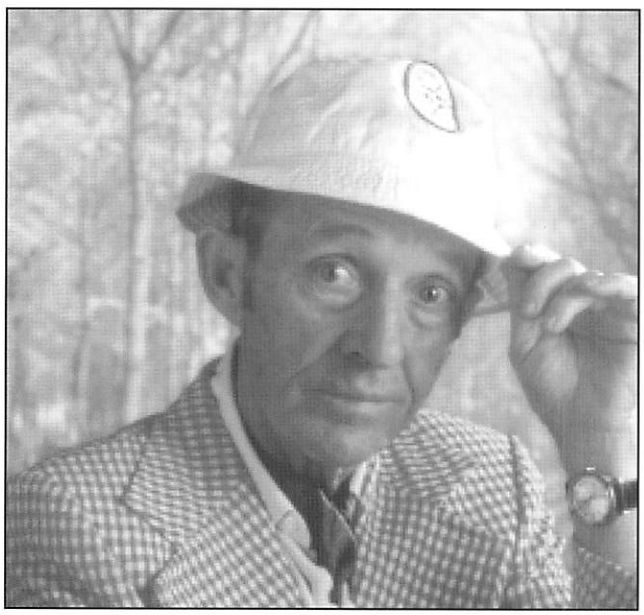
While most of the album was recorded in London on the

mornings of September 12, 13 & 14, 1977, the earliest tracks were cut in Los Angeles in 1976. "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year" was recorded on January 19, 1976 at the same session as "At My Time of Life," "The Only Way To Go" and "Children" (which were done for United Artists). "Spring" was added in anticipation of the "Seasons" project and was not released for that reason. The title track "Seasons" was recorded in L.A. on November 5, 1976 on the same session as "We've Only Just Begun" and "Beautiful Memories." The last two songs were cut for United Artists while "Seasons" was held back for the album (which was eventually released on Polydor). On this latter session, Bing actually recorded to backing tracks that had been recorded in London two months earlier. This was originally intended as a live session but, due to business commitments, Bing couldn't make the London dates and he suggested that we go ahead and record the orchestra and that he would add the vocals in L.A.

I flew to L.A. with the tapes in October and we did two overdub sessions of 9 titles the majority of which comprised the U.A. album "Beautiful Memories."

We planned to record the rest of "Seasons" the following June in London, but with Bing's accident in March of '77 it looked as though the album would never be made. But through sheer determination Bing recovered his health sufficiently to fly to London in early September where, during the last month of his life, turned out an amazing body of work starting with his last Christmas TV special, his last commercial album, his last live concerts (at the London Palladium and the Theatre Royal, Brighton in Sussex) and his last professional singing for the BBC - at Maida Vale in London - just three days before he died in Spain.

During this last month, I spent a lot of time with him - firstly finalising last minute details for the album (while he was working on the TV Special), secondly the actual recording of the album and lastly on October 11 at the BBC in the morning and at the photo studio in the afternoon for the album cover shot.



One of the photos not used for the album cover.

Now, to the album itself and the subject of this so-called "reverb." The setting up of a recording session - particularly one in which the singer and the orchestra are recorded at the same time - calls for a good deal of preparation. For most of the album, Bing was accompanied by large orchestral line-ups of up to 50 pieces at the high end and 20 pieces at the low end plus 8 backing singers (the voices were dubbed on afterwards). Because these were bigger than usual accompaniments it was essential that we use a large studio. I chose CBS studios in Whitfield Street, one of London's best studios (certainly superior to Abbey Road's Studio Two which was considered for the project). The great feature about CBS is that it has an almost completely "dead" acoustic. That is to say - if you clap your hands there is virtually no echo. Apart from preventing unnecessary "leakage" between different sections of the orchestra and the singer, it allows far greater freedom at the post-production stage where everything can be mixed to give a more natural overall blend of sound and balance.

Working in a recording studio is much like a film studio. The shooting of a film scene calls for careful placement of lighting. The key light - the back light - the "fill" light. All of these lights are placed to give a "natural" look to a scene or to create a given dramatic effect. Any cinematographer will tell you that every lighting set-up is a "compromise." Well much the same thing applies to a recording studio and the placement of microphones and audio screens between the different sections of the orchestra and the singer.

Bing liked to sing where he could see the conductor and he liked to be near the rhythm section. He did not like to sing in a vocal booth. So this really did call for a "compromise." I placed him closest to the bass and guitar with Pete Moore a few yards in front of him. The drummer - and we had a very good drummer in Alf Bigden (who played somewhat in the Buddy Rich style on the big band numbers) - I placed him behind an enclosed transparent screen so that he would not "leak" onto the other sections and we placed FOUR microphones onto his kit:- (a) the bass drum (b) the "crash" cymbal (c) the hi-hat cymbal and (d) the snare drum. This enabled us to create a more dynamic stereo effect that really helped to "drive" the orchestra whether on swing numbers of ballads. It also prevented the drums from leaking onto Bing's vocal mike.

Now to "Autumn In New York" and the so-called "reverb." Pete Moore wrote a particularly striking arrangement for this great song, one that captured the awesome feeling of that great city that included (if you listen carefully) snatches of Leonard Bernstein's "New York, New York" (from "On The Town") and "Sidewalks of New York". I could see that Bing was particularly impressed when he first heard the arrangement and it certainly inspired him to give a superb reading of this difficult song. He did it in two takes - which was about ten minutes from the time we put the music on the stands to the point where I said "That's a take."

Bing was in particularly powerful voice on this track (and "September Song") and when we came to mix the 24-track pre-master down to the commercial two-track stereo master we went for an overall acoustic "colour" that would complement both singer and orchestra.

There was no more use of "reverb" on Bing's voice than there was on the orchestra. The amount of vibrancy and resonance came from an EMT echo plate that fed the entire mix in varying degrees to produce what we felt was a "natural" acoustic. It was pretty much the same on all the tracks throughout the album.

The story about Engelbert Humperdinck's vocal being recorded in a bathroom may be true but it sounds apocryphal. In any case I think it's a terrible way to record a singer. Perhaps the most obvious use of echo (or "reverb" if you want to call it that) can be found on most of Tony Bennett's albums of the 1960s and early '70s. I've always felt that Tony is one

of the best singers in the business and never really needed that kind of treatment.

Bing was never given to direct praise. He made an exception in Pete Moore's case by signing the above photo, "To Pete, you're great"

In his book "My Singing Teachers," Mel Tormé (another superb singer) wrote glowingly about Bing's "unmatched resonance" pointing out that his low notes "can make your sub-woofers beg for mercy." So what's the point of adding excessive "reverb"?

Ken Barnes

There was some confusion as to what an EMT echo plate was and for further background, Nicholas Aw referred us to the web site of Sage Electronics which stated the following:

> During the '60s and '70s, most reverb used on famous recordings was generated from the EMT plate reverb. The sound quality of a plate is incredibly smooth and very dense. Invented in 1957 by EMT of Germany, the plate reverb consists of a thin metal plate suspended in a 4'x8' sound proofed enclosure. A transducer similar to the voice-coil of a cone loudspeaker is mounted on the plate to cause it to vibrate. Multiple reflections from the edges of the plate are picked up by two (for stereo) microphone-like transducers. Reverb time is varied by a damping pad which can be pressed against the plate thus absorbing its energy more quickly.

Ken Barnes came back in with:

My gratitude to Nicholas for showing interested parties what an EMT echo plate looks like. "Seasons," of course, was recorded at the tail end of the digital era and audio technology has moved on since then. If and when I get around to refurbishing the album you will notice certain improvements in regard to individual sound levels. But there won't be that much difference as regards Bing's vocals.

As previously explained, both voice and orchestra were recorded at the same time. There was roughly an 18 to 20 db (decibels) separation between Bing and the orchestra. Thus it would be unlikely that I could get any more "gain" on the voice without "crowding" the vocal channel.

Before started recording Bing I listened to many of his recordings from the '60s and early '70s as I could get my hands on. On most of them it seemed to me that he had been recorded too close to the mike making him sing at the same dynamic level throughout. I decided to take a different approach by placing him at least 12 inches away from the microphone. This allowed his tone to resonate more naturally.

The problem, of course, was that he did not like to sing in a vocal booth. So we had to find the largest studios possible where we could place instruments (particularly brass) a reasonable distance from his mike.

Nicholas mentioned "Children" as being one of his favourite tracks. It's one of my favourites too. He cut that song in just one take. I asked him to do a second one for "safety." But, after listening to it, he felt it was fine and said "Let's move on." I think the lyric of that song must have affected him because it was the only time I ever saw him with tears in his eyes. Listen to the track and it's not hard to figure out why.

Ken Barnes

Steven Lewis commented:

There is a difference between recording to a pre-recorded track, which I understand Bing's aversion to, and recording in an isolation booth with a live orchestra fed to you through headphones. You can do retakes. More important, you get better stereo separation and greater control over the audio mix. Isolation booths weren't used forty years earlier because recordings weren't made in stereo. It's the improvement in recording technology that made isolation booths useful. Bing's live concerts were by necessity live in front of an orchestra, but cutting an album had evolved and Bing seemed unwilling to change. Ken made the best of the situation he was handed by Bing.

Ken responded:

Your comments about Bing's reluctance to record to a track or in a vocal booth was not due to stubbornness on his part nor did it really cause me any headaches. Of course, it's true that had he sung in a confined space - as all artists do today - it would have been easier to get a more cleanly separated sound on his voice, but it's the performance that counts more than anything else. And in that department he was the total pro.

The thing is that, since the advent of stereo in the late 1950s, most recording sessions have been run by and for the engineers. This constant striving for audio perfection has resulted in a coldly clinical attitude to sound. As a producer, I've always considered the artist to be the real reason for the recording and that it's a vital part of the job to see that the artist is comfortable and satisfied with the conditions under which the recording is made. This invariably results in a better performance.

Bing and Ken Barnes running through Johnny Mercer's "Bon Vivant" at an earlier session. Bing later signed the photograph, "Dear Ken, I sing the songs".

While it's true that most artists over the last forty or so years have recorded in isolated conditions, most of the great

singers have preferred to record "live" - Sinatra always recorded this way because, like Bing, he liked the sound of a live orchestra behind him. And it's certainly still true today of Tony Bennett.

The same went for a good many other artists that I had the pleasure to record such as Peggy Lee, Rosemary Clooney, Frankie Laine and Jack Jones to name but a few. Of course, there were some - like Connie Francis and Slim Whitman - who always opted for the "security" of singing to tracks which is the standard practice today in all studios.

Which do I prefer? Well, it depends. If a singer is confident and has secure intonation (what I describe as an "ear" singer) then I would much prefer to record "live" because, as I say, it's the performance that matters. If, on the other hand, the artist is less accustomed to a backing or an orchestra full of expensive musicians (what I call a "note" singer) then it's easier and cheaper to lay the backing track and then work step by step with the artist - say four bars at a time - until you have a technically perfect performance. This takes much longer in terms of studio time but the orchestral bill is cheaper.

You see, with all the safety nets of modern-day recording techniques, there's no excuse for turning out a bad record. With "vari-speed" a bad singer's sour notes can be re-pitched to within a latitude of a quarter of a tone. Digital edits can cut into the middle of a note and replace it. All of these applications are light years away from when artists like Crosby, Como, Sinatra, Haymes, Torme etc. started their careers. And this is the difference between the earlier singers and the ones coming up today.

In the early big band days singers were hired - and fired - by musicians which meant, quite simply, if you couldn't carry a tune you didn't get the job. These days when singers gain fame through TV talent contests where their future is decided by tin-eared panelists (and mass audience textings and phone-ins) their recording careers depend on all the technological safety nets without which they would be lost. Add to this the tremendous amount of personal appearances and concerts where they are compelled to mime to the finished result in order to complete the illusion.

So what would I prefer? Give me an "ear" singer every time and I'd much prefer to record the track "live" and end up with a truthful performance. And that's what we got with Bing and all of his talented contemporaries. There's no substitute for talent.

Ken Barnes

Steven Lewis concluded the thread with:

I think the intuitions that drove Bing to the pinnacle of the pop music world abandoned him in the 1960s and it took a Ken Barnes to restore Bing's recording career to the standards of his hey-day. I think Ken was to Bing what George Martin was to the Beatles. It's too bad Bing and Ken did not rendezvous professionally 10 years sooner.

(Editor: And so say all of us! And the good news is that "Seasons" is definitely going to come out on CD and it will have a few interesting additions.)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby - Through The Years Volume 1: 1950-51 Sepia Records #1111 UK £6.99

1. Autumn Leaves 2. I've Never Been in Love Before 3. This Is the Time 4. Poppa Santa Claus (with The Andrews Sisters) 5. Mele Kalikimaka (with The Andrews Sisters) 6. If I Were a Bell (with Patty Andrews) 7. Silver Bells (with Carole Richards) 8. Looks Like a Cold, Cold Winter 9. Marshmallow World 10. Marrying for Love 11. The Best Thing for You 12. A Perfect Day 13. May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You 14. The Girl Friend 15. Without a Word of Warning 16. You Gotta Show Me 17. Then You've Never Been Blue 18. Black Ball Ferry Line (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. The Yodelling Ghost (with The Andrews Sisters) 20. With My Shillelagh Under My Arm 21. St. Patrick's Day Parade 22. Sentimental Music 23. Silver Moon 24. Copacabana 25. Quizas, Quizas, Quizas

Volume 1 or Volume 52, you takes your choice. This release of course is the continuation of the Chronological series of Bing's commercial recordings, which had reached Volume 51 when John McNicholas finally laid down his arms. Fortunately the enterprising UK label, Sepia Records has picked it up where he left off, maintaining the wonderful sound quality which was a feature of recent issues from John as well as taking the artwork and the presentation up a notch or two. There are some uncommon Crosby tracks amongst this set of 25 titles, such as Bing's 1951 partnership with Tommy Dorsey and the song that is the theme for the annual Crosby gathering in Leeds, "A Perfect Day". Copies of this CD are available from Michael Crampton or Wig Wiggins at reduced rates and Wig has asked me to point out that all 51 volumes of the Chronological series remain available either from himself or John McNicholas. This one is a must for any member and if you can afford it, buy 2! Sepia deserves our fullest support.

When Irish Eyes Are Smiling Varese Saraband 3020668762 USA $11.98

1. Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Green Of The Day (Special Irish version of Bing's radio show theme) 2. Dear Old Donegal 3. Galway Bay 4. MacNamara's Band 5. Peg O'My Heart 6. Kate (Have I Come Too Early, Too Late) 7. That Tumbledown Shack In Athlone 8. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (That's An Irish Lullaby) 9. The Donovans 10. Clancy Lowered The Boom (with Dennis Day) 11. Top O'The Morning 12. Two-Shillelagh O'Sullivan 13. How Are Things In Glocca Morra? 14. St. Patrick's Day Parade 15. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (Decca version)

Co-editor Greg Van Beek summed up this release as follows. "Bing's good friend in Ireland, the mighty George O'Reilly, has given us yet another Crosby gem, just in time for St. Patrick's Day. As most of you know, George was the man singularly responsible for Bing's wonderful 1967 St. Patrick's Day TV special "A Little Bit of Irish", which was released in pristine quality on DVD by Varese Sarabande in 2006. Last Christmas, George teamed once again with Varese Sarabande to give us a unique gift in the form of a CD of yuletide radio rarities from Bing titled "A Crosby Christmas". Now, George and Varese have teamed again to bring us When Irish Eyes Are Smiling: Irish Songs From His Classic Radio Broadcasts." Mastered from original sources, these tracks are good sound quality.

Bing Crosby & Friends Sounds Of Yesteryear UK £6.99
Disc 1: 1. Dearie 2. Lazybones 3. The Wedding Samba 4. Lonesome In the Saddle 5. Just the Way You Are 6. Yes Sir! That's My Baby 7. Yakka Hula Hicky Dula 8. Enjoy Yourself 9. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You 10. Play a Simple Melody 11. Let's Take an Old Fashioned Walk 12. Medley: Hello My Baby-In My Merry Oldsmobile-Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon-Walking My Baby Back Home 13. Blueberry Hill 14. If You Catch a Little Cold (shown as "To Prove That I'm In Love") 15. Medley: Lily of Laguna - Goodbyee
Disc 2: 1. Baby You Can Count On Me 2. The Song's Gotta Come From the Heart 3. La Borrachita 4. Go West Young Man 5. Medley: Timber Trail-You Are My Sunshine 6. Anything You Can Do 7. Clementine 8. Until the Next Time 9. Indian Summer 10. I Still Suits Me 11. For What? 12. Michigan Medley 13. Brahms Lullaby 14. Keep On Smiling 15. Medley: Whispering-Bye Bye Baby

Originally two LPs from the same stable as "It's Magic" which featured in the last issue, this will be a popular CD for anyone who enjoys Bing's radio duets. Drawn mostly from the Chesterfield radio shows, the duets feature Bing with Jolson, Durante, brother Bob, Ethel Merman, Groucho Marx – a list too long to repeat here in full!

Bing Crosby Sings the Great American Songbook – Acrobat Records USA $8.98
1. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive 2. I'll Get By 3. It Had to Be You 4. Jeepers Creepers 5. Oh, Lady Be Good 6. Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love) 7. People Will Say We're in Love 8. Lazybones 9. I'll Be Seeing You 10. Exactly Like You 11. Alexander's Ragtime Band 12. Moonlight Becomes You

Oh that this might have been the title to a follow up album to "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings"! Sadly, it isn't. It's a collection of songs, mostly from radio and one or two of them would be dubious entries in a "Great American Songbook" competition. Still, it's a good CD title.

DVD

Where have all the DVDs gone? Not much new this time, although a reissue of "Robin & the Seven Hoods" has one or two interesting extras, including commentary by Frank Sinatra Jnr. Interesting to see some of the reviews on the internet which point out, correctly, how Bing stole the show. There is also a collection of four Sennett titles along with the relatively rare "Reaching For The Moon" that are grouped together under the title "Road To Hollywood" (WienerWorld).
One interesting thing that does leap out however is this.
All You Need Is Love : The Story Of Popular Music Plastic Head USA c. $70

Here's what Greg had to say about it in his post on the Internet Museum:

"This is one set that should be in the library of any serious fan/researcher/scholar interested in the history of popular music. There are 17 one-hour episodes in this series, which were filmed in 1975-76 and broadcast worldwide on television between 1976 and 1980.

Bing Crosby filmed an interview for the series in 1976, and a quote from him appears on the cover of this new DVD set, along with quotes from John Lennon and Pete Seeger. Bing said of the series, "Magnificent...the editing is truly outstanding. A priceless archive". His interview contributions appear in at least 3 of the 17 episodes, which cover all aspects of popular music. Bing takes part in the introduction episode, as well as episodes on Tin Pan Alley and Swing music. His comments about both are very insightful, especially his description of 'song pluggers' as they were known. That episode originally aired on ITV in the UK on March 26, 1977.

What makes this series truly remarkable is the scope of performers who also filmed interviews in 1976-77, over 100 in all. These include Rudy Vallee, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Cab Calloway, Liberace, as well as songwriters Hoagy Carmichael and Irving Caesar, just to mention but a scant few from Bing's era. There are also rock, country, rhythm & blues, and other genre's represented through interview and archive footage. As an example, on the day they filmed Bing's interview, the producer also filmed interviews with Dizzy Gillespie and Herbie Hancock (or Hanrooster, if you prefer). The interviews themselves are fascinating, but the archive footage is even more riveting, some of which was filmed exclusively for this series (such as a 1976 performance of 'Minnie The Moocher' by Cab Calloway)."
Reviews on Amazon and the like are a bit mixed, mainly it seems because of problems with the transfer to DVD which on some screens, cuts off the top and bottom of the original.

What's On The Web?

Whilst doing some research for our forthcoming book on Perry Como, Malcolm and I discovered an interesting piece of news on the internet about Bing's 1957 Edsel Show that featured Sinatra and Louis Armstrong among the guests. Most of us have become accustomed to seeing very poor quality pictures of this show, a result of the Kinescope process that was the first technical solution to recording shows for later transmission. Kinescope was not much more advanced than putting a camera in front of a TV screen during a live broadcast and it became obsolete as a process as soon as videotape was invented. Conventional wisdom has it that Bing's 1957 show came just too late for the better quality videotaping process, or so we thought.

Kris Trexler is a two time Emmy award winning video/film editor, and he's been honoured with four Emmy nominations during his career. His wide-ranging interests include everything from early TV broadcasting to the outlandish chrome-laden 1950's luxury cruisers and the latest high technology transportation of the 21st Century. He maintains a web site at http://www.ev1.pair.com/ and this is what he says about Bing's Edsel Show.

"In September of 1987 I was reading a story in a broadcast trade publication about the history of videotape. The timeline in the story indicated that CBS had acquired their first generation Ampex Video Tape recorders in 1957 for use at the nearly new Television City complex in Hollywood. The recorders were destined to replace the inferior kinescope process, and one of the immediate uses would be to "tape delay" network programs for re-broadcast in the Pacific Time Zone. The story stated that the first use of Video Tape was for the CBS Evening News broadcast anchored by Douglas Edwards. But the first use for an entertainment program at Television City was around October 1957. WOW!! My imagination went to work OVERTIME. I wondered if "The Edsel Show" had possibly been recorded on Video Tape in addition to the lousy kinescope I had acquired in 1981?

I contacted the videotape archive departments at CBS, both in Hollywood and New York. No luck, both sources stated. "The Edsel Show" only existed as a kinescope - no videotape was recorded or saved, so I was told. Unconvinced, I placed a last-ditch call to the videotape engineering department at CBS Television City. I inquired if there was anyone still working there that had been with the tape department from the beginning. I was soon speaking to a gentleman on the verge of retirement who remembered "The Edsel Show" well. In fact he had the VIDEOTAPE of the show on his desk! I was in a state of shock. He told me that back in the old days it became common practice at CBS to take advantage of the "miracle" of Video Tape: the ability to erase and re-use the tape stock over and over. But he had personally preserved "The Edsel Show" because it was the FIRST entertainment Video Tape program recorded at CBS Television City.

I had established my credibility as a responsible editor and technician at a Hollywood facility that supplied programming to CBS, and I was given permission in October of 1987 to borrow the master 2" format Video Tape in order to duplicate it. The old cardboard package containing the tape had not been opened since 1957. Fortunately the tape was enclosed in a plastic bag inside the box and the ideal storage environment at CBS preserved the tape in excellent condition. 2" format Video Tape was fast becoming obsolete by 1987, so I made the duplicate recording onto 1" format tape which was the new standard at the time (I have since copied the program again to BetaCam digital format). As the VTR's were making the copy, I watched the show on a professional monitor with a studio sound system, and was absolutely amazed at the quality. A FAR CRY from the poor old kinescope that was thought to be the only surviving copy of "The Edsel Show." The original Video Tape's whereabouts are currently unknown, but its historical value has now been established and it is surely being well cared for."

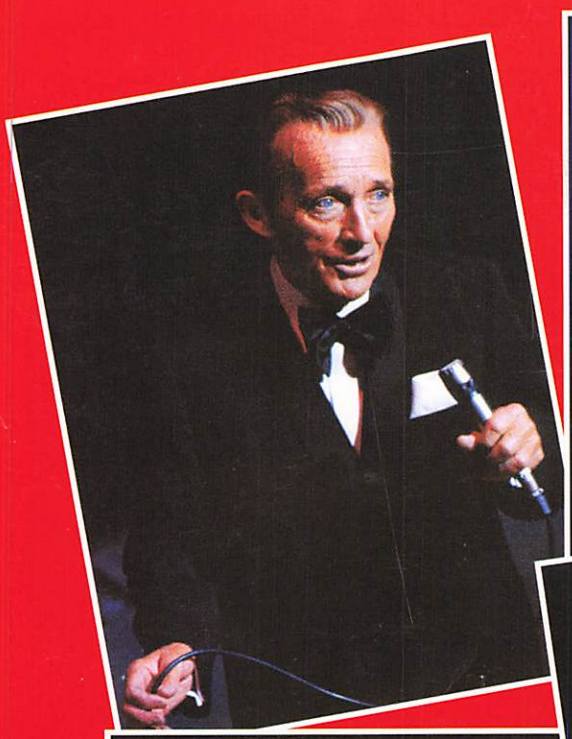
All we need is a copy!
Best for now.
Ken Crossland (ken@kencrossland.co.uk http://www.kencrossland.co.uk)

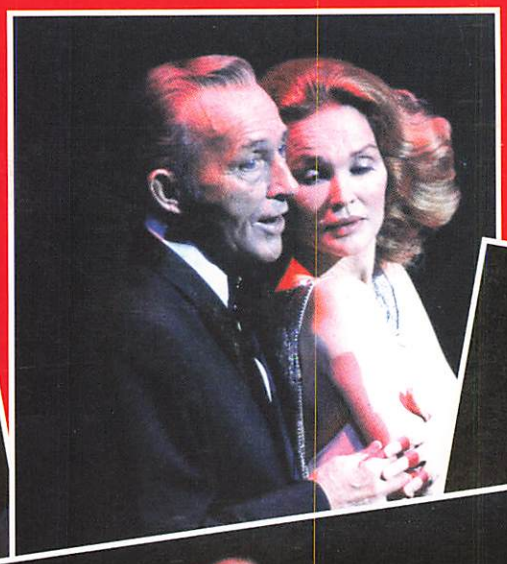
Announcement
THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY
43rd ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING
Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS, UK
Telephone: 0113 230 6000 Website: www.weetwood.co.uk
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5th 2008, 3pm - 10pm

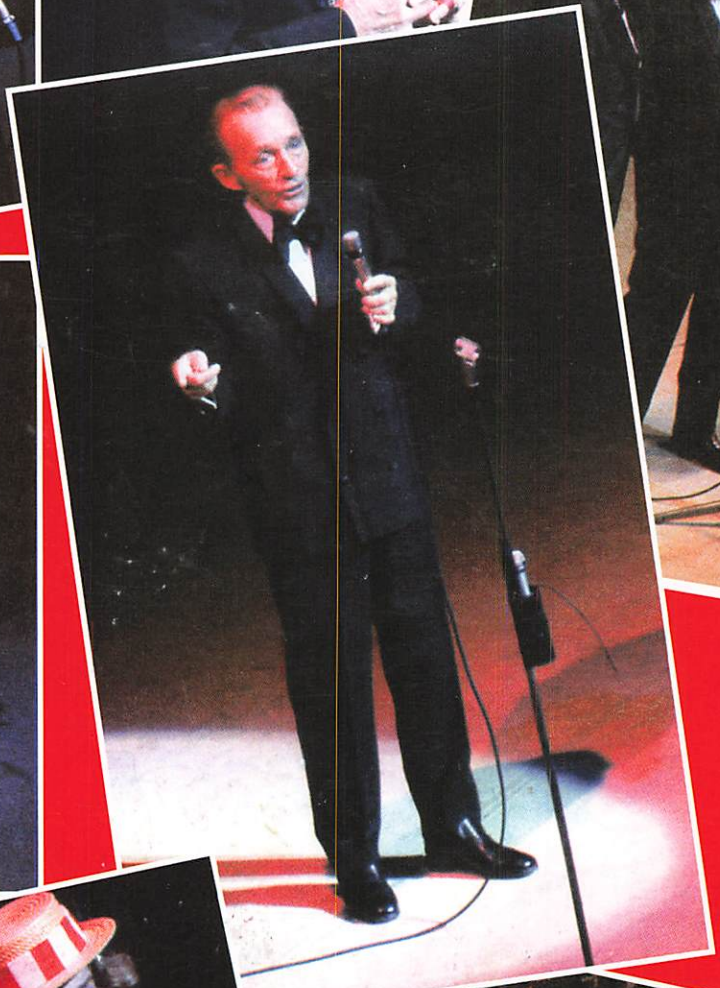
A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting. This is the 43rd annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times, and as usual, we shall have some interesting DVD material for you to see, using the excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall available for this purpose.

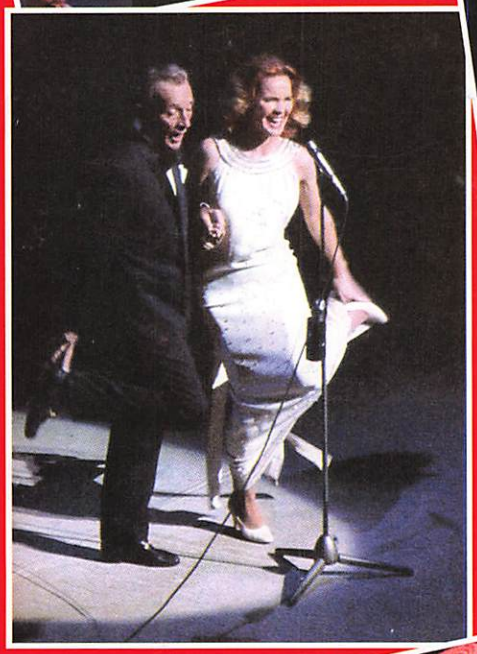
Last year, Bob Halls suggested that a few members might welcome the opportunity to get up and speak about their interest in Bing so anyone who would like to do this, please come prepared.

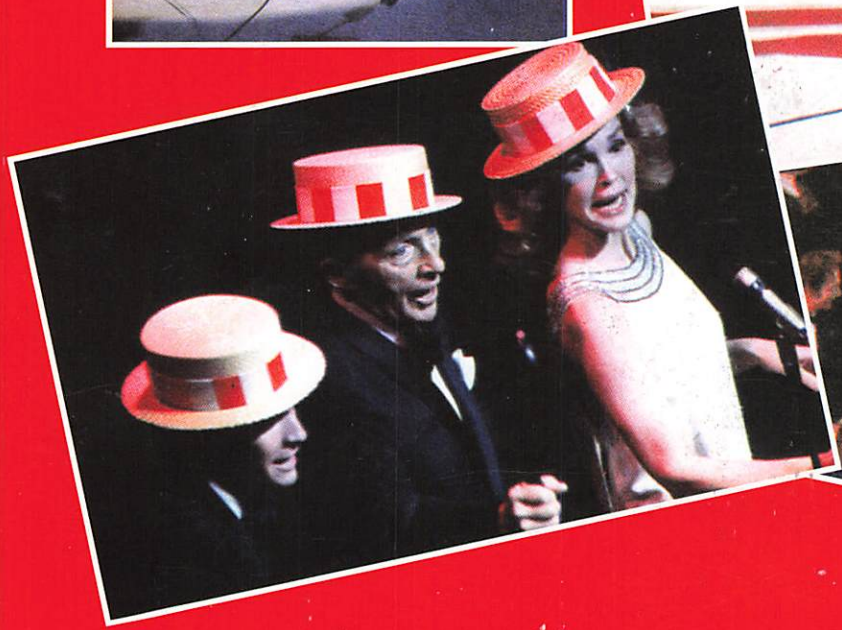
A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £24 per person (£20 for the meal, £4 for room-hire expenses) to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.











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